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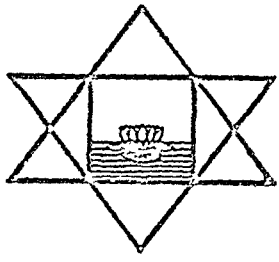

THE LIFE DIVINE

BOOK ONE PART ONE & BOOK TWO PART ONE

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VOLUME 18

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Contents

BOOK ONE

I.
THE HUMAN ASPIRATION 1

II.
THE TWO NEGATIONS:
THE MATERIALIST DENIAL 6

III.
THE TWO NEGATIONS:
THE REFUSAL OF THE ASCETIC . . . 17

IV.
REALITY OMNIPRESENT 25

V.
THE DESTINY OF THE INDIVIDUAL . . . 33

VI.
MAN IN THE UNIVERSE 42

VII.
THE EGO AND THE DUALITIES 51

VIII.
THE METHODS OF VEDANTIC KNOWLEDGE . . 60

IX.
THE PURE EXISTENT 71

X.
CONSCIOUS FORCE 80

XI.
DELIGHT OF EXISTENCE : THE PROBLEM . . 91

XII.
DELIGHT OF EXISTENCE : THE SOLUTION . . 100

XIII.
THE DIVINE MAYA 112

XIV.
THE SUPERMIND AS CREATOR 122

XV.
THE SUPREME TRUTH-CONSCIOUSNESS . . . 132

XVI.
THE TRIPLE STATUS OF SUPERMIND . . . 142

XVII.
THE DIVINE SOUL 150

XVIII.
MIND AND SUPERMIND 159

XIX.
LIFE 173

XX.
DEATH, DESIRE AND INCAPACITY . . . 188

XXI.
THE ASCENT OF LIFE 198

XXII.
THE PROBLEM OF LIFE 207

XXIII.
THE DOUBLE SOUL IN MAN 218

XXIV.
MATTER 231

XXV.
THE KNOT OF MATTER 240

XXVI.
THE ASCENDING SERIES OF SUBSTANCE . . . 252

XXVII.
THE SEVENFOLD CHORD OF BEING . . . 262

XXVIII.
SUPERMIND, MIND AND THE OVERMIND MAYA . 271

BOOK TWO

PART I

I.
INDETERMINATES, COSMIC DETERMINATIONS
AND THE INDETERMINABLE 295

II.
BRAHMAN, PURUSHA, ISHWARA —
MAYA, PRAKRITI, SHAKTI 322

III.
THE ETERNAL AND THE INDIVIDUAL . . . 365

IV.
THE DIVINE AND THE UNDIVINE 388

V.
THE COSMIC ILLUSION ;
MIND, DREAM AND HALLUCINATION . . 412

VI.
REALITY AND THE COSMIC ILLUSION . . . 439

VII.
THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE IGNORANCE . . 482

VIII.
MEMORY, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND
THE IGNORANCE 501

IX.
MEMORY, EGO AND SELF-EXPERIENCE . . . 511

X.
KNOWLEDGE BY IDENTITY AND SEPARATIVE
KNOWLEDGE 524

XI.
THE BOUNDARIES OF THE IGNORANCE . . . 553

XII.
THE ORIGIN OF THE IGNORANCE 566

XIII.
EXCLUSIVE CONCENTRATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS-
FORCE AND THE IGNORANCE 581

XIV.
THE ORIGIN AND REMEDY OF FALSEHOOD,
ERROR, WRONG AND EVIL 596

BOOK TWO, Part II appears as a separate volume.

OMNIPRESENT REALITY
AND
THE UNIVERSE

CHAPTER I

The Human Aspiration

> She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond, she is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming, — Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead....What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their light; projecting forwards her illumination she enters into communion with the rest that are to come.
>
> *Kutsa Angirasa — Rig Veda.*[1]

> Threefold are those supreme births of this divine force that is in the world, they are true, they are desirable; he moves there wide-overt within the Infinite and shines pure, luminous and fulfilling.... That which is immortal in mortals and possessed of the truth, is a god and established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine powers.... Become high-uplifted, O Strength, pierce all veils, manifest in us the things of the Godhead.
>
> *Vamadeva — Rig Veda.*[2]

THE earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation, — for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment, — is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last, — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.

These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience and the affirmation of higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity and only to be attained, in their organised entirety, by a revolutionary individual effort or an evolutionary general progression. To

[1] I. 113. 8, 10. [2] IV. 1. 7; IV. 2. 1; IV. 4. 5.

know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation, — this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution. To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their validity. But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.

For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough, utilitarian and unillumined compromise. For essentially, all Nature seeks a harmony, life and matter in their own sphere as much as mind in the arrangement of its perceptions. The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour. The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities; for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organised mind-supporting animal body. The accordance of conscious mind and conscious

will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or sub-conscious will is another problem of opposites in which she has produced astonishing results and aims always at higher marvels; for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge. Not only, then, is the upward impulse of man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seem to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings.

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case, the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind, and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life. As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever-ascending series in the power of its will-to-be; as there, so here, it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties. As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organisation in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine life. The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said,

worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realisation of that which she secretly is. We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond. If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realisation of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth.

Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an immortal aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement, a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos, a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being who alone renders time and space and cosmos possible, and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind. Attempts are sometimes made to have done finally with questionings which have so often been declared insoluble by logical thought and to persuade men to limit their mental activities to the practical and immediate problems of their material existence in the universe; but such evasions are never permanent in their effect. Mankind returns from them with a more vehement impulse of inquiry or a more violent hunger for an immediate solution. By that hunger mysticism profits and new religions arise to replace the old that have been destroyed or stripped of significance by a scepticism which itself could not satisfy because, although its business was inquiry, it was unwilling sufficiently to inquire. The attempt to deny or stifle a truth because it is yet obscure in its outward workings and too often represented by obscurantist superstition or a crude faith, is itself a kind of obscurantism. The will to escape from a cosmic necessity because

it is arduous, difficult to justify by immediate tangible results, slow in regulating its operations, must turn out eventually to have been no acceptance of the truth of Nature but a revolt against the secret, mightier will of the great Mother. It is better and more rational to accept what she will not allow us as a race to reject and lift it from the sphere of blind instinct, obscure intuition and random aspiration into the light of reason and an instructed and consciously self-guiding will. And if there is any higher light of illumined intuition or self-revealing truth which is now in man either obstructed and inoperative or works with intermittent glancings as if from behind a veil or with occasional displays as of the northern lights in our material skies, then there also we need not fear to aspire. For it is likely that such is the next higher state of consciousness of which Mind is only a form and veil, and through the splendours of that light may lie the path of our progressive self-enlargement into whatever highest state is humanity's ultimate resting-place.

CHAPTER II

The Two Negations

I. THE MATERIALIST DENIAL

> He energised conscious-force (in the austerity of thought) and came to the knowledge that Matter is the Brahman. For from Matter all existences are born; born, by Matter they increase and enter into Matter in their passing hence. Then he went to Varuna, his father, and said, "Lord, teach me of the Brahman." But he said to him: "Energise (again) the conscious-energy in thee; for the Energy is Brahman."
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[1]

THE affirmation of a divine life upon earth and an immortal sense in mortal existence can have no base unless we recognise not only eternal Spirit as the inhabitant of this bodily mansion, the wearer of this mutable robe, but accept Matter of which it is made, as a fit and noble material out of which He weaves constantly His garbs, builds recurrently the unending series of His mansions.

Nor is this, even, enough to guard us against a recoil from life in the body unless, with the Upanishads, perceiving behind their appearances the identity in essence of these two extreme terms of existence, we are able to say in the very language of those ancient writings, "Matter also is Brahman", and to give its full value to the vigorous figure by which the physical universe is described as the external body of the Divine Being. Nor, — so far divided apparently are these two extreme terms, — is that identification convincing to the rational intellect if we refuse to recognise a series of ascending terms (Life, Mind, Supermind and the grades that link Mind to Supermind) between Spirit and Matter. Otherwise the two must appear as irreconcilable opponents bound together in an unhappy wedlock and their divorce the one reasonable solution. To identify them, to represent each in the terms of the other, becomes an artificial creation of Thought opposed to the logic of facts and possible only by an irrational mysticism.

[1] III. 1, 2.

If we assert only pure Spirit and a mechanical unintelligent substance or energy, calling one God or Soul and the other Nature, the inevitable end will be that we shall either deny God or else turn from Nature. For both Thought and Life, a choice then becomes imperative. Thought comes to deny the one as an illusion of the imagination or the other as an illusion of the senses; Life comes to fix on the immaterial and flee from itself in a disgust or a self-forgetting ecstasy, or else to deny its own immortality and take its orientation away from God and towards the animal. Purusha and Prakriti, the passively luminous Soul of the Sankhyas and their mechanically active Energy, have nothing in common, not even their opposite modes of inertia; their antinomies can only be resolved by the cessation of the inertly driven Activity into the immutable Repose upon which it has been casting in vain the sterile procession of its images. Shankara's wordless, inactive Self and his Maya of many names and forms are equally disparate and irreconcilable entities; their rigid antagonism can terminate only by the dissolution of the multitudinous illusion into the sole Truth of an eternal Silence.

The materialist has an easier field; it is possible for him by denying Spirit to arrive at a more readily convincing simplicity of statement, a real Monism, the Monism of Matter or else of Force. But in this rigidity of statement it is impossible for him to persist permanently. He too ends by positing an unknowable as inert, as remote from the known universe as the passive Purusha or the silent Atman. It serves no purpose but to put off by a vague concession the inexorable demands of Thought or to stand as an excuse for refusing to extend the limits of inquiry.

Therefore, in these barren contradictions the human mind cannot rest satisfied. It must seek always a complete affirmation; it can find it only by a luminous reconciliation. To reach that reconciliation it must traverse the degrees which our inner consciousness imposes on us and, whether by objective method of analysis applied to Life and Mind as to Matter or by subjective synthesis and illumination, arrive at the repose of the ultimate unity without denying the energy of the expressive multiplicity. Only in such a complete and catholic affirmation can all the multiform and apparently contradictory data of existence be

harmonised and the manifold conflicting forces which govern our thought and life discover the central Truth which they are here to symbolise and variously fulfil. Then only can our Thought, having attained a true centre, ceasing to wander in circles, work like the Brahman of the Upanishad, fixed and stable even in its play and its world-wide coursing, and our life, knowing its aim, serve it with a serene and settled joy and light as well as with a rhythmically discursive energy.

But when that rhythm has once been disturbed, it is necessary and helpful that man should test separately, in their extreme assertion, each of the two great opposites. It is the mind's natural way of returning more perfectly to the affirmation it has lost. On the road it may attempt to rest in the intervening degrees, reducing all things into the terms of an original Life-Energy or of sensation or of Ideas; but these exclusive solutions have always an air of unreality. They may satisfy for a time the logical reason which deals only with pure ideas, but they cannot satisfy the mind's sense of actuality. For the mind knows that there is something behind itself which is not the Idea; it knows, on the other hand, that there is something within itself which is more than the vital Breath. Either Spirit or Matter can give it for a time some sense of ultimate reality; not so any of the principles that intervene. It must, therefore, go to the two extremes before it can return fruitfully upon the whole. For by its very nature, served by a sense that can perceive with distinctness only the parts of existence and by a speech that, also, can achieve distinctness only when it carefully divides and limits, the intellect is driven, having before it this multiplicity of elemental principles, to seek unity by reducing all ruthlessly to the terms of one. It attempts practically, in order to assert this one, to get rid of the others. To perceive the real source of their identity without this exclusive process, it must either have overleaped itself or must have completed the circuit only to find that all equally reduce themselves to That which escapes definition or description and is yet not only real but attainable. By whatever road we may travel, That is always the end at which we arrive and we can only escape it by refusing to complete the journey.

It is therefore of good augury that after many experiments

and verbal solutions we should now find ourselves standing today in the presence of the two that have alone borne for long the most rigorous tests of experience, the two extremes, and that at the end of the experience both should have come to a result which the universal instinct in mankind, that veiled judge, sentinel and representative of the universal Spirit of Truth, refuses to accept as right or as satisfying. In Europe and in India, respectively, the negation of the materialist and the refusal of the ascetic have sought to assert themselves as the sole truth and to dominate the conception of Life. In India, if the result has been a great heaping up of the treasures of the Spirit, — or of some of them, — it has also been a great bankruptcy of Life; in Europe, the fullness of riches and the triumphant mastery of this world's powers and possessions have progressed towards an equal bankruptcy in the things of the Spirit. Nor has the intellect, which sought the solution of all problems in the one term of Matter, found satisfaction in the answer that it has received.

Therefore the time grows ripe and the tendency of the world moves towards a new and comprehensive affirmation in thought and in inner and outer experience and to its corollary, a new and rich self-fulfilment in an integral human existence for the individual and for the race.

From the difference in the relations of Spirit and Matter to the Unknowable which they both represent, there arises also a difference of effectiveness in the material and the spiritual negations. The denial of the materialist although more insistent and immediately successful, more facile in its appeal to the generality of mankind, is yet less enduring, less effective finally than the absorbing and perilous refusal of the ascetic. For it carries within itself its own cure. Its most powerful element is the Agnosticism which, admitting the Unknowable behind all manifestation, extends the limits of the unknowable until it comprehends all that is merely unknown. Its premise is that the physical senses are our sole means of Knowledge and that Reason, therefore, even in its most extended and vigorous flights, cannot escape beyond their domain; it must deal always and solely with the facts which they provide or suggest; and the suggestions themselves must always be kept tied to their origins; we cannot

go beyond, we cannot use them as a bridge leading us into a domain where more powerful and less limited faculties come into play and another kind of inquiry has to be instituted.

A premise so arbitrary pronounces on itself its own sentence of insufficiency. It can only be maintained by ignoring or explaining away all that vast field of evidence and experience which contradicts it, denying or disparaging noble and useful faculties, active consciously or obscurely or at worst latent in all human beings, and refusing to investigate supraphysical phenomena except as manifested in relation to matter and its movements and conceived as a subordinate activity of material forces. As soon as we begin to investigate the operations of mind and of supermind, in themselves and without the prejudgment that is determined from the beginning to see in them only a subordinate term of Matter, we come into contact with a mass of phenomena which escape entirely from the rigid hold, the limiting dogmatism of the materialist formula. And the moment we recognise, as our enlarging experience compels us to recognise, that there are in the universe knowable realities beyond the range of the senses and in man powers and faculties which determine rather than are determined by the material organs through which they hold themselves in touch with the world of the senses, — that outer shell of our true and complete existence, — the premise of materialistic Agnosticism disappears. We are ready for a large statement and an ever-developing inquiry.

But, first, it is well that we should recognise the enormous, the indispensable utility of the very brief period of rationalistic Materialism through which humanity has been passing. For that vast field of evidence and experience which now begins to reopen its gates to us, can only be safely entered when the intellect has been severely trained to a clear austerity; seized on by unripe minds, it lends itself to the most perilous distortions and misleading imaginations and actually in the past encrusted a real nucleus of truth with such an accretion of perverting superstitions and irrationalising dogmas that all advance in true knowledge was rendered impossible. It became necessary for a time to make a clean sweep at once of the truth and its disguise in order that the road might be clear for a new departure and a surer advance.

The rationalistic tendency of Materialism has done mankind this great service.

For the faculties that transcend the senses, by the very fact of their being immeshed in Matter, missioned to work in a physical body, put in harness to draw one car along with the emotional desires and nervous impulses, are exposed to a mixed functioning in which they are in danger of illuminating confusion rather than clarifying truth. Especially is this mixed functioning dangerous when men with unchastened minds and unpurified sensibilities attempt to rise into the higher domains of spiritual experience. In what regions of unsubstantial cloud and semi-brilliant fog or a murk visited by flashes which blind more than they enlighten, do they not lose themselves by that rash and premature adventure! An adventure necessary indeed in the way in which Nature chooses to effect her advance, — for she amuses herself as she works, — but still, for the Reason, rash and premature.

It is necessary, therefore, that advancing Knowledge should base herself on a clear, pure and disciplined intellect. It is necessary, too, that she should correct her errors sometimes by a return to the restraint of sensible fact, the concrete realities of the physical world. The touch of Earth is always reinvigorating to the son of Earth, even when he seeks a supraphysical Knowledge. It may even be said that the supraphysical can only be really mastered in its fullness — to its heights we can always reach — when we keep our feet firmly on the physical. "Earth is His footing",[1] says the Upanishad whenever it images the Self that manifests in the universe. And it is certainly the fact that the wider we extend and the surer we make our knowledge of the physical world, the wider and surer becomes our foundation for the higher knowledge, even for the highest, even for the Brahmavidya.

In emerging, therefore, out of the materialistic period of human Knowledge we must be careful that we do not rashly condemn what we are leaving or throw away even one tittle of its gains, before we can summon perceptions and powers that are well grasped and secure, to occupy their place. Rather we shall observe with respect and wonder the work that Atheism has done

[1] "*Padbhyām pṛthivī.*" — *Mundaka Upanishad.* II. 1. 4.
"*Pṛthivī pādasyam.*" — *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.* I. 1. 1.

for the Divine and admire the services that Agnosticism has rendered in preparing the illimitable increase of knowledge. In our world error is continually the handmaid and pathfinder of Truth; for error is really a half-truth that stumbles because of its limitations; often it is Truth that wears a disguise in order to arrive unobserved near to its goal. Well, if it could always be, as it has been in the great period we are leaving, the faithful handmaid, severe, conscientious, clean-handed, luminous within its limits, a half-truth and not a reckless and presumptuous aberration.

A certain kind of Agnosticism is the final truth of all knowledge. For when we come to the end of whatever path, the universe appears as only a symbol or an appearance of an unknowable Reality which translates itself here into different systems of values, physical values, vital and sensational values, intellectual, ideal and spiritual values. The more That becomes real to us, the more it is seen to be always beyond defining thought and beyond formulating expression. "Mind attains not there, nor speech."[1] And yet as it is possible to exaggerate, with the Illusionists, the unreality of the appearance, so it is possible to exaggerate the unknowableness of the Unknowable. When we speak of It as unknowable, we mean, really, that It escapes the grasp of our thought and speech, instruments which proceed always by the sense of difference and express by the way of definition; but if not knowable by thought, It is attainable by a supreme effort of consciousness. There is even a kind of Knowledge which is one with Identity and by which, in a sense, It can be known. Certainly, that Knowledge cannot be reproduced successfully in the terms of thought and speech, but when we have attained to it, the result is a revaluation of That in the symbols of our cosmic consciousness, not only in one but in all the ranges of symbols, which results in a revolution of our internal being and, through the internal, of our external life. Moreover, there is also a kind of Knowledge through which That does reveal itself by all these names and forms of phenomenal existence which to the ordinary intelligence only conceal It. It is this higher but not highest process of Knowledge to which we can attain by passing the limits of the materialistic formula and scrutinising Life, Mind and Supermind in

[1] *Kena Upanishad*. I. 3.

the phenomena that are characteristic of them and not merely in those subordinate movements by which they link themselves to Matter.

The Unknown is not the Unknowable;[1] it need not remain the unknown for us, unless we choose ignorance or persist in our first limitations. For to all things that are not unknowable, all things in the universe, there correspond in that universe faculties which can take cognisance of them, and in man, the microcosm, these faculties are always existent and at a certain stage capable of development. We may choose not to develop them; where they are partially developed, we may discourage and impose on them a kind of atrophy. But, fundamentally, all possible knowledge is knowledge within the power of humanity. And since in man there is the inalienable impulse of Nature towards self-realisation, no struggle of the intellect to limit the action of our capacities within a determined area can for ever prevail. When we have proved Matter and realised its secret capacities, the very knowledge which has found its convenience in that temporary limitation must cry to us, like the Vedic Restrainers, "Forth now and push forward also in other fields."[2]

If modern Materialism were simply an unintelligent acquiescence in the material life, the advance might be indefinitely delayed. But since its very soul is the search for Knowledge, it will be unable to cry a halt; as it reaches the barriers of sense-knowledge and of the reasoning from sense-knowledge, its very rush will carry it beyond and the rapidity and sureness with which it has embraced the visible universe is only an earnest of the energy and success which we may hope to see repeated in the conquest of what lies beyond, once the stride is taken that crosses the barrier. We see already that advance in its obscure beginnings.

Not only in the one final conception, but in the great line of its general results Knowledge, by whatever path it is followed, tends to become one. Nothing can be more remarkable and suggestive than the extent to which modern Science confirms in the domain of Matter the conceptions and even the very formulae of language which were arrived at, by a very different method, in

[1] Other is That than the Known; also it is above the Unknown. — *Kena Upanishad.* I. 3.
[2] *Rig Veda.* I. 4. 5.

the Vedanta, — the original Vedanta, not of the schools of metaphysical philosophy, but of the Upanishads. And these, on the other hand, often reveal their full significance, their richer contents only when they are viewed in the new light shed by the discoveries of modern Science, — for instance, that Vedantic expression which describes things in the Cosmos as one seed arranged by the universal Energy in multitudinous forms.[1] Significant, especially, is the drive of Science towards a Monism which is consistent with multiplicity, towards the Vedic idea of the one essence with its many becomings. Even if the dualistic appearance of Matter and Force be insisted on, it does not really stand in the way of this Monism. For it will be evident that essential Matter is a thing non-existent to the senses and only, like the Pradhana of the Sankhyas, a conceptual form of substance; and in fact the point is increasingly reached where only an arbitrary distinction in thought divides form of substance from form of energy.

Matter expresses itself eventually as a formulation of some unknown Force. Life, too, that yet unfathomed mystery, begins to reveal itself as an obscure energy of sensibility imprisoned in its material formulation; and when the dividing ignorance is cured which gives us the sense of a gulf between Life and Matter, it is difficult to suppose that Mind, Life and Matter will be found to be anything else than one Energy triply formulated, the triple world of the Vedic seers. Nor will the conception then be able to endure of a brute material Force as the mother of Mind. The Energy that creates the world can be nothing else than a Will, and Will is only consciousness applying itself to a work and a result.

What is that work and result, if not a self-involution of Consciousness in form and a self-evolution out of form so as to actualise some mighty possibility in the universe which it has created? And what is its will in Man if not a will to unending Life, to unbounded Knowledge, to unfettered Power? Science itself begins to dream of the physical conquest of death, expresses an insatiable thirst for knowledge, is working out something like a terrestrial omnipotence for humanity. Space and

[1] *Swetaswatara Upanishad.* VI. 12.

Time are contracting to the vanishing-point in its works, and it strives in a hundred ways to make man the master of circumstance and so lighten the fetters of causality. The idea of limit, of the impossible begins to grow a little shadowy and it appears instead that whatever man constantly wills, he must in the end be able to do; for the consciousness in the race eventually finds the means. It is not in the individual that this omnipotence expresses itself, but the collective Will of mankind that works out with the individual as a means. And yet when we look more deeply, it is not any conscious Will of the collectivity, but a superconscious Might that uses the individual as a centre and means, the collectivity as a condition and field. What is this but the God in man, the infinite Identity, the multitudinous Unity, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, who having made man in His own image, with the ego as a centre of working, with the race, the collective Narayana[1], the *viśvamānava*[2] as the mould and circumscription, seeks to express in them some image of the unity, omniscience, omnipotence which are the self-conception of the Divine? "That which is immortal in mortals is a God and established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine powers."[3] It is this vast cosmic impulse which the modern world, without quite knowing its own aim, yet serves in all its activities and labours subconsciously to fulfil.

But there is always a limit and an encumbrance, — the limit of the material field in the Knowledge, the encumbrance of the material machinery in the Power. But here also the latest trend is highly significant of a freer future. As the outposts of scientific Knowledge come more and more to be set on the borders that divide the material from the immaterial, so also the highest achievements of practical Science are those which tend to simplify and reduce to the vanishing-point the machinery by which the greatest effects are produced. Wireless telegraphy is Nature's exterior sign and pretext for a new orientation. The sensible physical means for the intermediate transmission of the physical force is removed; it is only preserved at the points of impulsion

[1] A name of Vishnu, who, as the God in man, lives constantly associated in a dual unity with Nara, the human being.

[2] The universal man. [3] *Rig Veda.* IV. 2. 1.

and reception. Eventually even these must disappear; for when the laws and forces of the supraphysical are studied with the right starting-point, the means will infallibly be found for Mind directly to seize on the physical energy and speed it accurately upon its errand. There, once we bring ourselves to recognise it, lie the gates that open upon the enormous vistas of the future.

Yet even if we had full knowledge and control of the worlds immediately above Matter, there would still be a limitation and still a beyond. The last knot of our bondage is at that point where the external draws into oneness with the internal, the machinery of ego itself becomes subtilised to the vanishing-point and the law of our action is at last unity embracing and possessing multiplicity and no longer, as now, multiplicity struggling towards some figure of unity. There is the central throne of cosmic Knowledge looking out on her widest dominion; there the empire of oneself with the empire of one's world;[1] there the life[2] in the eternally consummate Being and the realisation of His divine nature[3] in our human existence.

[1] *Svārājya* and *Sāmrājya*, the double aim proposed to itself by the positive Yoga of the ancients.

[2] *Sālokya-mukti*, liberation by conscious existence in one world of being with the Divine.

[3] *Sādharmya-mukti*, liberation by assumption of the Divine Nature.

CHAPTER III

The Two Negations

II. THE REFUSAL OF THE ASCETIC

> All this is the Brahman; this Self is the Brahman and the Self is fourfold.
>
> Beyond relation, featureless, unthinkable, in which all is still.
>
> *Mandukya Upanishad.*[1]

AND still there is a beyond.

For on the other side of the cosmic consciousness there is, attainable to us, a consciousness yet more transcendent, — transcendent not only of the ego, but of the Cosmos itself, — against which the universe seems to stand out like a petty picture against an immeasurable background. That supports the universal activity, — or perhaps only tolerates it; It embraces Life with Its vastness, — or else rejects it from Its infinitude.

If the materialist is justified from his point of view in insisting on Matter as reality, the relative world as the sole thing of which we can in some sort be sure and the Beyond as wholly unknowable, if not indeed non-existent, a dream of the mind, an abstraction of Thought divorcing itself from reality, so also is the Sannyasin, enamoured of that Beyond, justified from his point of view in insisting on pure Spirit as the reality, the one thing free from change, birth, death, and the relative as a creation of the mind and the senses, a dream, an abstraction in the contrary sense of Mentality withdrawing from the pure and eternal Knowledge.

What justification, of logic or of experience, can be asserted in support of the one extreme which cannot be met by an equally cogent logic and an equally valid experience at the other end? The world of Matter is affirmed by the experience of the physical senses which, because they are themselves unable to perceive anything immaterial or not organised as gross Matter, would persuade us that the suprasensible is the unreal. This vulgar or

[1] Verses 2, 7.

rustic error of our corporeal organs does not gain in validity by being promoted into the domain of philosophical reasoning. Obviously, their pretension is unfounded. Even in the world of Matter there are existences of which the physical senses are incapable of taking cognisance. Yet the denial of the suprasensible as necessarily an illusion or a hallucination depends on this constant sensuous association of the real with the materially perceptible, which is itself a hallucination. Assuming throughout what it seeks to establish, it has the vice of the argument in a circle and can have no validity for an impartial reasoning.

Not only are there physical realities which are suprasensible, but, if evidence and experience are at all a test of truth, there are also senses which are supraphysical[1] and can not only take cognisance of the realities of the material world without the aid of the corporeal sense-organs, but can bring us into contact with other realities, supraphysical and belonging to another world — included, that is to say, in an organisation of conscious experiences that are dependent on some other principle than the gross Matter of which our suns and earths seem to be made.

Constantly asserted by human experience and belief since the origins of thought, this truth, now that the necessity of an exclusive preoccupation with the secrets of the material world no longer exists, begins to be justified by new-born forms of scientific research. The increasing evidences, of which only the most obvious and outward are established under the name of telepathy with its cognate phenomena, cannot long be resisted except by minds shut up in the brilliant shell of the past, by intellects limited in spite of their acuteness through the limitation of their field of experience and inquiry, or by those who confuse enlightenment and reason with the faithful repetition of the formulas left to us from a bygone century and the jealous conservation of dead or dying intellectual dogmas.

It is true that the glimpse of supraphysical realities acquired by methodical research has been imperfect and is yet ill-affirmed; for the methods used are still crude and defective. But these rediscovered subtle senses have at least been found to be true

[1] *Sūkṣma indriya*, subtle organs, existing in the subtle body (*sūkṣma deha*), and the means of subtle vision and experience (*sūkṣma dṛṣṭi*)

witnesses to physical facts beyond the range of the corporeal organs. There is no justification, then, for scouting them as false witnesses when they testify to supraphysical facts beyond the domain of the material organisation of consciousness. Like all evidence, like the evidence of the physical senses themselves, their testimony has to be controlled, scrutinised and arranged by the reason, rightly translated and rightly related, and their field, laws and processes determined. But the truth of great ranges of experience whose objects exist in a more subtle substance and are perceived by more subtle instruments than those of gross physical Matter, claims in the end the same validity as the truth of the material universe. The worlds beyond exist: they have their universal rhythm, their grand lines and formations, their self-existent laws and mighty energies, their just and luminous means of knowledge. And here on our physical existence and in our physical body they exercise their influences; here also they organise their means of manifestation and commission their messengers and their witnesses.

But the worlds are only frames for our experience, the senses only instruments of experience and conveniences. Consciousness is the great underlying fact, the universal witness for whom the world is a field, the senses instruments. To that witness the worlds and their objects appeal for their reality and for the one world or the many, for the physical equally with the supraphysical we have no other evidence that they exist. It has been argued that this is no relation peculiar to the constitution of humanity and its outlook upon an objective world, but the very nature of existence itself; all phenomenal existence consists of an observing consciousness and an active objectivity, and the Action cannot proceed without the Witness because the universe exists only in or for the consciousness that observes and has no independent reality. It has been argued in reply that the material universe enjoys an eternal self-existence; it was here before life and mind made their appearance: it will survive after they have disappeared and no longer trouble with their transient strivings and limited thoughts the eternal and inconscient rhythm of the suns. The difference, so metaphysical in appearance, is yet of the utmost practical import, for it determines the whole out-

look of man upon life, the goal that he shall assign for his efforts and the field in which he shall circumscribe his energies. For it raises the question of the reality of cosmic existence and, more important still, the question of the value of human life.

If we push the materialist conclusion far enough, we arrive at an insignificance and unreality in the life of the individual and the race which leaves us, logically, the option between either a feverish effort of the individual to snatch what he may from a transient existence, to "live his life", as it is said, or a dispassionate and objectless service of the race and the individual, knowing well that the latter is a transient fiction of the nervous mentality and the former only a little more long-lived collective form of the same regular nervous spasm of Matter. We work or enjoy under the impulsion of a material energy which deceives us with the brief delusion of life or with the nobler delusion of an ethical aim and a mental consummation. Materialism like spiritual Monism arrives at a Maya that is and yet is not, — is, for it is present and compelling, is not, for it is phenomenal and transitory in its works. At the other end, if we stress too much the unreality of the objective world, we arrive by a different road at similar but still more trenchant conclusions, — the fictitious character of the individual ego, the unreality and purposelessness of human existence, the return into the Non-Being or the relationless Absolute as the sole rational escape from the meaningless tangle of phenomenal life.

And yet the question cannot be solved by logic arguing on the data of our ordinary physical existence; for in those data there is always a hiatus of experience which renders all argument inconclusive. We have, normally, neither any definitive experience of a cosmic mind or supermind not bound up with the life of the individual body, nor, on the other hand, any firm limit of experience which would justify us in supposing that our subjective self really depends upon the physical frame and can neither survive it nor enlarge itself beyond the individual body. Only by an extension of the field of our consciousness or an unhoped-for increase in our instruments of knowledge can the ancient quarrel be decided.

The extension of our consciousness, to be satisfying, must

necessarily be an inner enlargement from the individual into the cosmic existence. For the Witness, if he exists, is not the individual embodied mind born in the world, but that cosmic Consciousness embracing the universe and appearing as an immanent Intelligence in all its works to which either world subsists eternally and really as Its own active existence or else from which it is born and into which it disappears by an act of knowledge or by an act of conscious power. Not organised mind, but that which, calm and eternal, broods equally in the living earth and the living human body and to which mind and senses are dispensable instruments, is the Witness of cosmic existence and its Lord.

The possibility of a cosmic consciousness in humanity is coming slowly to be admitted in modern Psychology, like the possibility of more elastic instruments of knowledge, although still classified, even when its value and power are admitted, as a hallucination. In the psychology of the East it has always been recognised as a reality and the aim of our subjective progress. The essence of the passage over to this goal is the exceeding of the limits imposed on us by the ego-sense and at least a partaking, at most an identification with the self-knowledge which broods secret in all life and in all that seems to us inanimate.

Entering into that Consciousness, we may continue to dwell, like It, upon universal existence. Then we become aware — for all our terms of consciousness and even our sensational experience begin to change, — of Matter as one existence and of bodies as its formations in which the one existence separates itself physically in the single body from itself in all others and again by physical means establishes communication between these multitudinous points of its being. Mind we experience similarly, and Life also, as the same existence one in its multiplicity, separating and reuniting itself in each domain by means appropriate to that movement. And, if we choose, we can proceed farther and, after passing through many linking stages, become aware of a supermind whose universal operation is the key to all lesser activities. Nor do we become merely conscious of this cosmic existence, but likewise conscious in it, receiving it in sensation, but also entering into it in awareness. In it we live as we lived before in the ego-sense, active, more and more in contact, even

unified more and more with other minds, other lives, other bodies than the organism we call ourselves, producing effects not only on our own moral and mental being and on the subjective being of others, but even on the physical world and its events by means nearer to the divine than those possible to our egoistic capacity.

Real then to the man who has had contact with it or lives in it, is this cosmic consciousness, with a greater than the physical reality; real in itself, real in its effects and works. And as it is thus real to the world which is its own total expression, so is the world real to it; but not as an independent existence. For in that higher and less hampered experience we perceive that consciousness and being are not different from each other, but all being is a supreme consciousness, all consciousness is self-existence, eternal in itself, real in its works and neither a dream nor an evolution. The world is real precisely because it exists only in consciousness; for it is a Conscious Energy one with Being that creates it. It is the existence of material form in its own right apart from the self-illumined energy which assumes the form, that would be a contradiction of the truth of things, a phantasmagoria, a nightmare, an impossible falsehood.

But this conscious Being which is the truth of the infinite supermind, is more than the universe and lives independently in Its own inexpressible infinity as well as in the cosmic harmonies. World lives by That; That does not live by the world. And as we can enter into the cosmic consciousness and be one with all cosmic existence, so we can enter into the world-transcending consciousness and become superior to all cosmic existence. And then arises the question which first occurred to us, whether this transcendence is necessarily also a rejection. What relation has this universe to the Beyond?

For at the gates of the Transcendent stands that mere and perfect Spirit described in the Upanishads, luminous, pure, sustaining the world but inactive in it, without sinews of energy, without flaw of duality, without scar of division, unique, identical, free from all appearance of relation and of multiplicity, — the pure Self of the Adwaitins[1], the inactive Brahman, the transcendent Silence. And the mind when it passes those gates

[1] The Vedantic Monists.

suddenly, without intermediate transitions, receives a sense of the unreality of the world and the sole reality of the Silence which is one of the most powerful and convincing experiences of which the human mind is capable. Here, in the perception of this pure Self or of the Non-Being behind it, we have the starting-point for a second negation, — parallel at the other pole to the materialistic, but more complete, more final, more perilous in its effects on the individuals or collectivities that hear its potent call to the wilderness, — the refusal of the ascetic.

It is this revolt of Spirit against Matter that for two thousand years, since Buddhism disturbed the balance of the old Aryan world, has dominated increasingly the Indian mind. Not that the sense of the cosmic illusion is the whole of Indian thought; there are other philosophical statements, other religious aspirations. Nor has some attempt at an adjustment between the two terms been wanting even from the most extreme philosophies. But all have lived in the shadow of the great Refusal and the final end of life for all is the garb of the ascetic. The general conception of existence has been permeated with the Buddhistic theory of the chain of Karma and with the consequent antinomy of bondage and liberation, bondage by birth, liberation by cessation from birth. Therefore all voices are joined in one great consensus that not in this world of the dualities can there be our kingdom of heaven, but beyond, whether in the joys of the eternal Vrindavan[1] or the high beatitude of Brahmaloka[2], beyond all manifestations in some ineffable Nirvana[3] or where all separate experience is lost in the featureless unity of the indefinable Existence. And through many centuries a great army of shining witnesses, saints and teachers, names sacred to Indian memory and dominant in Indian imagination, have borne always the same witness and swelled always the same lofty and distant appeal, — renunciation the sole path of knowledge, acceptation of physical life the act of the ignorant, cessation from birth the right use of human birth, the call of the Spirit, the recoil from Matter.

[1] *Goloka*, the Vaishnava heaven of eternal Beauty and Bliss.

[2] The highest state of pure existence, consciousness and beatitude attainable by the soul without complete extinction in the Indefinable.

[3] Extinction, not necessarily of all being, but of being as we know it; extinction of ego, desire and egoistic action and mentality.

For an age out of sympathy with the ascetic spirit — and throughout all the rest of the world the hour of the Anchorite may seem to have passed or to be passing — it is easy to attribute this great trend to the failing of vital energy in an ancient race tired out by its burden, its once vast share in the common advance, exhausted by its many-sided contribution to the sum of human effort and human knowledge. But we have seen that it corresponds to a truth of existence, a state of conscious realisation which stands at the very summit of our possibility. In practice also the ascetic spirit is an indispensable element in human perfection and even its separate affirmation cannot be avoided so long as the race has not at the other end liberated its intellect and its vital habits from subjection to an always insistent animalism.

We seek indeed a larger and completer affirmation. We perceive that in the Indian ascetic ideal the great Vedantic formula, "One without a second", has not been read sufficiently in the light of that other formula equally imperative, "All this is the Brahman". The passionate aspiration of man upward to the Divine has not been sufficiently related to the descending movement of the Divine leaning downward to embrace eternally Its manifestation. Its meaning in Matter has not been so well understood as Its truth in the Spirit. The Reality which the Sannyasin seeks has been grasped in its full height, but not, as by the ancient Vedantins, in its full extent and comprehensiveness. But in our completer affirmation we must not minimise the part of the pure spiritual impulse. As we have seen how greatly Materialism has served the ends of the Divine, so we must acknowledge the still greater service rendered by Asceticism to Life. We shall preserve the truths of material Science and its real utilities in the final harmony, even if many or even if all of its existing forms have to be broken or left aside. An even greater scruple of right preservation must guide us in our dealing with the legacy, however actually diminished or depreciated, of the Aryan past.

CHAPTER IV

Reality Omnipresent

> If one knows Him as Brahman the Non-Being, he becomes merely the non-existent. If one knows that Brahman Is, then is he known as the real in existence.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[1]

SINCE, then, we admit both the claim of the pure Spirit to manifest in us its absolute freedom and the claim of universal Matter to be the mould and condition of our manifestation, we have to find a truth that can entirely reconcile these antagonists and can give to both their due portion in Life and their due justification in Thought, amercing neither of its rights, denying in neither the sovereign truth from which even its errors, even the exclusiveness of its exaggerations draw so constant a strength. For wherever there is an extreme statement that makes such a powerful appeal to the human mind, we may be sure that we are standing in the presence of no mere error, superstition or hallucination, but of some sovereign fact disguised which demands our fealty and will avenge itself if denied or excluded. Herein lies the difficulty of a satisfying solution and the source of that lack of finality which pursues all mere compromises between Spirit and Matter. A compromise is a bargain, a transaction of interests between two conflicting powers; it is not a true reconciliation. True reconciliation proceeds always by a mutual comprehension leading to some sort of intimate oneness. It is therefore through the utmost possible unification of Spirit and Matter that we shall best arrive at their reconciling truth and so at some strongest foundation for a reconciling practice in the inner life of the individual and his outer existence.

We have found already in the cosmic consciousness a meeting-place where Matter becomes real to Spirit, Spirit becomes real to Matter. For in the cosmic consciousness Mind and Life are intermediaries and no longer, as they seem in the ordinary egoistic mentality, agents of separation, fomenters of an artificial quarrel

[1] II. 6.

between the positive and negative principles of the same unknowable Reality. Attaining to the cosmic consciousness Mind, illuminated by a knowledge that perceives at once the truth of Unity and the truth of Multiplicity and seizes on the formulae of their interaction, finds its own discords at once explained and reconciled by the divine Harmony; satisfied, it consents to become the agent of that supreme union between God and Life towards which we tend. Matter reveals itself to the realising thought and to the subtilised senses as the figure and body of Spirit, — Spirit in its self-formative extension. Spirit reveals itself through the same consenting agents as the soul, the truth, the essence of Matter. Both admit and confess each other as divine, real and essentially one. Mind and Life are disclosed in that illumination as at once figures and instruments of the supreme Conscious Being by which It extends and houses Itself in material form and in that form unveils Itself to Its multiple centres of consciousness. Mind attains its self-fulfilment when it becomes a pure mirror of the Truth of Being which expresses itself in the symbols of the universe; Life, when it consciously lends its energies to the perfect self-figuration of the Divine in ever-new forms and activities of the universal existence.

In the light of this conception we can perceive the possibility of a divine life for man in the world which will at once justify Science by disclosing a living sense and intelligible aim for the cosmic and the terrestrial evolution and realise by the transfiguration of the human soul into the divine the great ideal dream of all high religions.

But what then of that silent Self, inactive, pure, self-existent, self-enjoying, which presented itself to us as the abiding justification of the ascetic? Here also harmony and not irreconcilable opposition must be the illuminative truth. The silent and the active Brahman are not different, opposite and irreconcilable entities, the one denying, the other affirming a cosmic illusion; they are one Brahman in two aspects, positive and negative, and each is necessary to the other. It is out of this Silence that the Word which creates the worlds for ever proceeds; for the Word expresses that which is self-hidden in the Silence. It is an eternal passivity which makes possible the perfect freedom and omni-

potence of an eternal divine activity in innumerable cosmic systems. For the becomings of that activity derive their energies and their illimitable potency of variation and harmony from the impartial support of the immutable Being, its consent to this infinite fecundity of its own dynamic Nature.

Man, too, becomes perfect only when he has found within himself that absolute calm and passivity of the Brahman and supports by it with the same divine tolerance and the same divine bliss a free and inexhaustible activity. Those who have thus possessed the Calm within can perceive always welling out from its silence the perennial supply of the energies that work in the universe. It is not, therefore, the truth of the Silence to say that it is in its nature a rejection of the cosmic activity. The apparent incompatibility of the two states is an error of the limited Mind which, accustomed to trenchant oppositions of affirmation and denial and passing suddenly from one pole to the other, is unable to conceive of a comprehensive consciousness vast and strong enough to include both in a simultaneous embrace. The Silence does not reject the world; it sustains it. Or rather it supports with an equal impartiality the activity and the withdrawal from the activity and approves also the reconciliation by which the soul remains free and still even while it lends itself to all action.

But, still, there is the absolute withdrawal, there is the Non-Being. Out of the Non-Being, says the ancient Scripture, Being appeared.[1] Then into the Non-Being it must surely sink again. If the infinite indiscriminate Existence permits all possibilities of discrimination and multiple realisation, does not the Non-Being at least, as primal state and sole constant reality, negate and reject all possibility of a real universe? The Nihil of certain Buddhist schools would then be the true ascetic solution; the Self, like the ego, would be only an ideative formation by an illusory phenomenal consciousness.

But again we find that we are being misled by words, deceived by the trenchant oppositions of our limited mentality with its fond reliance on verbal distinctions as if they perfectly represented ultimate truths and its rendering of our supramental

[1] In the beginning all this was the Non-Being. It was thence that Being was born.
— *Taittiriya Upanishad.* II. 7.

experiences in the sense of those intolerant distinctions. Non-Being is only a word. When we examine the fact it represents, we can no longer be sure that absolute non-existence has any better chance than the infinite Self of being more than an ideative formation of the mind. We really mean by this Nothing something beyond the last term to which we can reduce our purest conception and our most abstract or subtle experience of actual being as we know or conceive it while in this universe. This Nothing then is merely a something beyond positive conception. We erect a fiction of nothingness in order to overpass, by the method of total exclusion, all that we can know and consciously are. Actually when we examine closely the Nihil of certain philosophies, we begin to perceive that it is a zero which is All or an indefinable Infinite which appears to the mind a blank, because mind grasps only finite constructions, but is in fact the only true Existence.[1]

And when we say that out of Non-Being Being appeared, we perceive that we are speaking in terms of Time about that which is beyond Time. For what was that portentous date in the history of eternal Nothing on which Being was born out of it or when will come that other date equally formidable on which an unreal all will relapse into the perpetual void? Sat and Asat, if they have both to be affirmed, must be conceived as if they obtained simultaneously. They permit each other even though they refuse to mingle. Both, since we must speak in terms of Time, are eternal. And who shall persuade eternal Being that it does not really exist and only eternal Non-Being is? In such a negation of all experience how shall we find the solution that explains all experience?

Pure Being is the affirmation by the Unknowable of Itself as the free base of all cosmic existence. We give the name of Non-Being to a contrary affirmation of Its freedom from all cosmic existence, — freedom, that is to say, from all positive terms of actual existence which consciousness in the universe can formu-

[1] Another Upanishad rejects the birth of being out of Non-Being as an impossibility; Being, it says, can only be born from Being. But if we take Non-Being in the sense, not of an inexistent Nihil but of an *x* which exceeds our idea or experience of existence, — a sense applicable to the Absolute Brahman of the Adwaita as well as the Void or Zero of the Buddhists, — the impossibility disappears, for That may very well be the source of being, whether by a conceptual or formative Maya or a manifestation or creation out of itself.

late to itself, even from the most abstract, even from the most transcendent. It does not deny them as a real expression of Itself, but It denies Its limitation by all expression or any expression whatsoever. The Non-Being permits the Being, even as the Silence permits the Activity. By this simultaneous negation and affirmation, not mutually destructive, but complementary to each other like all contraries, the simultaneous awareness of conscious Self-being as a reality and the Unknowable beyond as the same Reality becomes realisable to the awakened human soul. Thus was it possible for the Buddha to attain the state of Nirvana and yet act puissantly in the world, impersonal in his inner consciousness, in his action the most powerful personality that we know of as having lived and produced results upon earth.

When we ponder on these things, we begin to perceive how feeble in their self-assertive violence and how confusing in their misleading distinctness are the words that we use. We begin also to perceive that the limitations we impose on the Brahman arise from a narrowness of experience in the individual mind which concentrates itself on one aspect of the Unknowable and proceeds forthwith to deny or disparage all the rest. We tend always to translate too rigidly what we can conceive or know of the Absolute into the terms of our own particular relativity. We affirm the One and Identical by passionately discriminating and asserting the egoism of our own opinions and partial experiences against the opinions and partial experiences of others. It is wiser to wait, to learn, to grow, and, since we are obliged for the sake of our self-perfection to speak of these things which no human speech can express, to search for the widest, the most flexible, the most catholic affirmation possible and found on it the largest and most comprehensive harmony.

We recognise, then, that it is possible for the consciousness in the individual to enter into a state in which relative existence appears to be dissolved and even Self seems to be an inadequate conception. It is possible to pass into a Silence beyond the Silence. But this is not the whole of our ultimate experience, nor the single and all-excluding truth. For we find that this Nirvana, this self-extinction, while it gives an absolute peace and freedom to the soul within is yet consistent in practice with a desireless but effect-

ive action without. This possibility of an entire motionless impersonality and void Calm within doing outwardly the works of the eternal verities, Love, Truth and Righteousness, was perhaps the real gist of the Buddha's teaching, — this superiority to ego and to the chain of personal workings and to the identification with mutable form and idea, not the petty ideal of an escape from the trouble and suffering of the physical birth. In any case, as the perfect man would combine in himself the silence and the activity, so also would the completely conscious soul reach back to the absolute freedom of the Non-Being without therefore losing its hold on Existence and the universe. It would thus reproduce in itself perpetually the eternal miracle of the divine Existence, in the universe, yet always beyond it and even, as it were, beyond itself. The opposite experience could only be a concentration of mentality in the individual upon Non-existence with the result of an oblivion and personal withdrawal from a cosmic activity still and always proceeding in the consciousness of the Eternal Being.

Thus, after reconciling Spirit and Matter in the cosmic consciousness, we perceive the reconciliation, in the transcendental consciousness, of the final assertion of all and its negation. We discover that all affirmations are assertions of status or activity in the Unknowable; all the corresponding negations are assertions of Its freedom both from and in that status or activity. The Unknowable is Something to us supreme, wonderful and ineffable which continually formulates Itself to our consciousness and continually escapes from the formulation It has made. This it does not as some malicious spirit or freakish magician leading us from falsehood to greater falsehood and so to a final negation of all things, but as even here the Wise beyond our wisdom guiding us from reality to ever profounder and vaster reality until we find the profoundest and vastest of which we are capable. An omnipresent reality is the Brahman, not an omnipresent cause of persistent illusions.

If we thus accept a positive basis for our harmony — and on what other can harmony be founded? — the various conceptual formulations of the Unknowable, each of them representing a truth beyond conception, must be understood as far as possible

in their relation to each other and in their effect upon life, not separately, not exclusively, not so affirmed as to destroy or unduly diminish all other affirmations. The real Monism, the true Adwaita, is that which admits all things as the one Brahman and does not seek to bisect Its existence into two incompatible entities, an eternal Truth and an eternal Falsehood, Brahman and not-Brahman, Self and not-Self, a real Self and an unreal yet perpetual Maya. If it be true that the Self alone exists, it must be also true that all is the Self. And if this Self, God or Brahman is no helpless state, no bounded power, no limited personality, but the self-conscient All, there must be some good and inherent reason in it for the manifestation, to discover which we must proceed on the hypothesis of some potency, some wisdom, some truth of being in all that is manifested. The discord and apparent evil of the world must in their sphere be admitted, but not accepted as our conquerors. The deepest instinct of humanity seeks always and seeks wisely wisdom as the last word of the universal manifestation, not an eternal mockery and illusion, — a secret and finally triumphant good, not an all-creative and invincible evil, — an ultimate victory and fulfilment, not the disappointed recoil of the soul from its great adventure.

For we cannot suppose that the sole Entity is compelled by something outside or other than Itself, since no such thing exists. Nor can we suppose that It submits unwillingly to something partial within Itself which is hostile to its whole Being, denied by It and yet too strong for It; for this would be only to erect in other language the same contradiction of an All and something other than the All. Even if we say that the universe exists merely because the Self in its absolute impartiality tolerates all things alike, viewing with indifference all actualities and all possibilities, yet is there something that wills the manifestation and supports it, and this cannot be something other than the All. Brahman is indivisible in all things and whatever is willed in the world has been ultimately willed by the Brahman. It is only our relative consciousness, alarmed or baffled by the phenomena of evil, ignorance and pain in the cosmos, that seeks to deliver the Brahman from responsibility for Itself and its workings by erecting some opposite principle, Maya or Mara, conscious Devil or self-

existent principle of evil. There is one Lord and Self and the many are only His representations and becomings.

If then the world is a dream or an illusion or a mistake, it is a dream originated and willed by the Self in its totality and not only originated and willed, but supported and perpetually entertained. Moreover, it is a dream existing in a Reality and the stuff of which it is made is that Reality, for Brahman must be the material of the world as well as its base and continent. If the gold of which the vessel is made is real, how shall we suppose that the vessel itself is a mirage? We see that these words, dream, illusion, are tricks of speech, habits of our relative consciousness; they represent a certain truth, even a great truth, but they also misrepresent it. Just as Non-Being turns out to be other than mere nullity, so the cosmic Dream turns out to be other than mere phantasm and hallucination of the mind. Phenomenon is not phantasm; phenomenon is the substantial form of a Truth.

We start, then, with the conception of an omnipresent Reality of which neither the Non-Being at the one end nor the universe at the other are negations that annul; they are rather different states of the Reality, obverse and reverse affirmations. The highest experience of this Reality in the universe shows it to be not only a conscious Existence, but a supreme Intelligence and Force and a self-existent Bliss; and beyond the universe it is still some other unknowable existence, some utter and ineffable Bliss. Therefore we are justified in supposing that even the dualities of the universe, when interpreted not as now by our sensational and partial conceptions, but by our liberated intelligence and experience, will be also resolved into those highest terms. While we still labour under the stress of the dualities, this perception must no doubt constantly support itself on an act of faith, but a faith which the highest Reason, the widest and most patient reflection do not deny, but rather affirm. This creed is given, indeed, to humanity to support it on its journey, until it arrives at a stage of development when faith will be turned into knowledge and perfect experience and Wisdom will be justified of her works.

CHAPTER V

The Destiny of the Individual

> By the Ignorance they cross beyond Death and by the Knowledge enjoy Immortality.... By the Non-Birth they cross beyond Death and by the Birth enjoy Immortality.
>
> *Isha Upanishad.*[1]

AN OMNIPRESENT Reality is the truth of all life and existence whether absolute or relative, whether corporeal or incorporeal, whether animate or inanimate, whether intelligent or unintelligent; and in all its infinitely varying and even constantly opposed self-expressions, from the contradictions nearest to our ordinary experience to those remotest antinomies which lose themselves on the verges of the Ineffable, the Reality is one and not a sum or concourse. From that all variations begin, in that all variations consist, to that all variations return. All affirmations are denied only to lead to a wider affirmation of the same Reality. All antinomies confront each other in order to recognise one Truth in their opposed aspects and embrace by the way of conflict their mutual Unity. Brahman is the Alpha and the Omega. Brahman is the One besides whom there is nothing else existent.

But this unity is in its nature indefinable. When we seek to envisage it by the mind we are compelled to proceed through an infinite series of conceptions and experiences. And yet in the end we are obliged to negate our largest conceptions, our most comprehensive experiences in order to affirm that the Reality exceeds all definitions. We arrive at the formula of the Indian sages, *neti neti*, "It is not this, It is not that", there is no experience by which we can limit It, there is no conception by which It can be defined.

An Unknowable which appears to us in many states and attributes of being, in many forms of consciousness, in many activities of energy, this is what Mind can ultimately say about the existence which we ourselves are and which we see in all that is presented to our thought and senses. It is in and through those

[1] Verses 11, 14.

states, those forms, those activities that we have to approach and know the Unknowable. But if in our haste to arrive at a Unity that our mind can seize and hold, if in our insistence to confine the Infinite in our embrace we identify the Reality with any one definable state of being however pure and eternal, with any particular attribute however general and comprehensive, with any fixed formulation of consciousness however vast in its scope, with any energy or activity however boundless its application, and if we exclude all the rest, then our thoughts sin against Its unknowableness and arrive not at a true unity but at a division of the Indivisible.

So strongly was this truth perceived in the ancient times that the Vedantic Seers, even after they had arrived at the crowning idea, the convincing experience of Sachchidananda as the highest positive expression of the Reality to our consciousness, erected in their speculations or went on in their perceptions to an Asat, a Non-Being beyond, which is not the ultimate existence, the pure consciousness, the infinite bliss of which all our experiences are the expression or the deformation. If at all an existence, a consciousness, a bliss, it is beyond the highest and purest positive form of these things that here we can possess and other therefore than what here we know by these names. Buddhism, somewhat arbitrarily declared by the theologians to be an un-Vedic doctrine because it rejected the authority of the Scriptures, yet goes back to this essentially Vedantic conception. Only, the positive and synthetic teaching of the Upanishads beheld Sat and Asat not as opposites destructive of each other, but as the last antinomy through which we look up to the Unknowable. And in the transactions of our positive consciousness, even Unity has to make its account with Multiplicity; for the Many also are Brahman. It is by Vidya, the Knowledge of the Oneness, that we know God; without it Avidya, the relative and multiple consciousness, is a night of darkness and a disorder of Ignorance. Yet if we exclude the field of that Ignorance, if we get rid of Avidya as if it were a thing non-existent and unreal, then Knowledge itself becomes a sort of obscurity and a source of imperfection. We become as men blinded by a light so that we can no longer see the field which that light illumines.

Such is the teaching, calm, wise and clear, of our most ancient sages. They had the patience and the strength to find and to know; they had also the clarity and humility to admit the limitation of our knowledge. They perceived the borders where it has to pass into something beyond itself. It was a later impatience of heart and mind, vehement attraction to an ultimate bliss or high masterfulness of pure experience and trenchant intelligence which sought the One to deny the Many and because it had received the breath of the heights scorned or recoiled from the secret of the depths. But the steady eye of the ancient wisdom perceived that to know God really, it must know Him everywhere equally and without distinction, considering and valuing but not mastered by the oppositions through which He shines.

We will put aside then the trenchant distinctions of a partial logic which declares that because the One is the reality, the Many are an illusion, and because the Absolute is Sat, the one existence, the relative is Asat and non-existent. If in the Many we pursue insistently the One, it is to return with the benediction and the revelation of the One confirming itself in the Many.

We will guard ourselves also against the excessive importance that the mind attaches to particular points of view at which it arrives in its more powerful expansions and transitions. The perception of the spiritualised mind that the universe is an unreal dream can have no more absolute a value to us than the perception of the materialised mind that God and the Beyond are an illusory idea. In the one case the mind, habituated only to the evidence of the senses and associating reality with corporeal fact, is either unaccustomed to use other means of knowledge or unable to extend the notion of reality to a supra-physical experience. In the other case the same mind, passing beyond to the overwhelming experience of an incorporeal reality, simply transfers the same inability and the same consequent sense of dream or hallucination to the experience of the senses. But we perceive also the truth that these two conceptions disfigure. It is true that for this world of form in which we are set for our self-realisation, nothing is entirely valid until it has possessed itself of our physical consciousness and manifested on the lowest levels in harmony with its manifestation on the highest sum-

mits. It is equally true that form and matter asserting themselves as a self-existent reality are an illusion of Ignorance. Form and matter can be valid only as shape and substance of manifestation for the incorporeal and immaterial. They are in their nature an act of divine consciousness, in their aim the representation of a status of the Spirit.

In other words, if Brahman has entered into form and represented Its being in material substance, it can only be to enjoy self-manifestation in the figures of relative and phenomenal consciousness. Brahman is in this world to represent Itself in the values of Life. Life exists in Brahman in order to discover Brahman in itself. Therefore man's importance in the world is that he gives to it that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by a perfect self-discovery becomes possible. To fulfil God in life is man's manhood. He starts from the animal vitality and its activities, but a divine existence is his objective.

But as in Thought, so in Life, the true rule of self-realisation is a progressive comprehension. Brahman expresses Itself in many successive forms of consciousness, successive in their relation even if coexistent in being or coeval in Time, and Life in its self-unfolding must also rise to ever-new provinces of its own being. But if in passing from one domain to another we renounce what has already been given us from eagerness for our new attainment, if in reaching the mental life we cast away or belittle the physical life which is our basis, or if we reject the mental and physical in our attraction to the spiritual, we do not fulfil God integrally, nor satisfy the conditions of His self-manifestation. We do not become perfect, but only shift the field of our imperfection or at most attain a limited altitude. However high we may climb, even though it be to the Non-Being itself, we climb ill if we forget our base. Not to abandon the lower to itself, but to transfigure it in the light of the higher to which we have attained, is true divinity of nature. Brahman is integral and unifies many states of consciousness at a time; we also, manifesting the nature of Brahman, should become integral and all-embracing.

Besides the recoil from the physical life, there is another exaggeration of the ascetic impulse which this ideal of an integral

manifestation corrects. The nodus of Life is the relation between three general forms of consciousness, the individual, the universal and the transcendent or supracosmic. In the ordinary distribution of life's activities the individual regards himself as a separate being included in the universe and both as dependent upon that which transcends alike the universe and the individual. It is to this Transcendence that we give currently the name of God, who thus becomes to our conceptions not so much supracosmic as extracosmic. The belittling and degradation of both the individual and the universe is a natural consequence of this division: the cessation of both cosmos and individual by the attainment of the Transcendence would be logically its supreme conclusion.

The integral view of the unity of Brahman avoids these consequences. Just as we need not give up the bodily life to attain to the mental and spiritual, so we can arrive at a point of view where the preservation of the individual activities is no longer inconsistent with our comprehension of the cosmic consciousness or our attainment to the transcendent and supracosmic. For the World-Transcendent embraces the universe, is one with it and does not exclude it, even as the universe embraces the individual, is one with him and does not exclude him. The individual is a centre of the whole universal consciousness; the universe is a form and definition which is occupied by the entire immanence of the Formless and Indefinable.

This is always the true relation, veiled from us by our ignorance or our wrong consciousness of things. When we attain to knowledge or right consciousness, nothing essential in the eternal relation is changed, but only the inview and the outview from the individual centre is profoundly modified and consequently also the spirit and effect of its activity. The individual is still necessary to the action of the Transcendent in the universe and that action in him does not cease to be possible by his illumination. On the contrary, since the conscious manifestation of the Transcendent in the individual is the means by which the collective, the universal is also to become conscious of itself, the continuation of the illumined individual in the action of the world is an imperative need of the world-play. If his inexorable removal through

the very act of illumination is the law, then the world is condemned to remain eternally the scene of unredeemed darkness, death and suffering. And such a world can only be a ruthless ordeal or a mechanical illusion.

It is so that ascetic philosophy tends to conceive it. But individual salvation can have no real sense if existence in the cosmos is itself an illusion. In the Monistic view the individual soul is one with the Supreme, its sense of separateness an ignorance, escape from the sense of separateness and identity with the Supreme its salvation. But who then profits by this escape? Not the supreme Self, for it is supposed to be always and inalienably free, still, silent, pure. Not the world, for that remains constantly in the bondage and is not freed by the escape of any individual soul from the universal Illusion. It is the individual soul itself which effects its supreme good by escaping from the sorrow and the division into the peace and the bliss. There would seem then to be some kind of reality of the individual soul as distinct from the world and from the Supreme even in the event of freedom and illumination. But for the Illusionist the individual soul is an illusion and non-existent except in the inexplicable mystery of Maya. Therefore we arrive at the escape of an illusory non-existent soul from an illusory non-existent bondage in an illusory non-existent world as the supreme good which that non-existent soul has to pursue! For this is the last word of the Knowledge, "There is none bound, none freed, none seeking to be free." Vidya turns out to be as much a part of the Phenomenal as Avidya; Maya meets us even in our escape and laughs at the triumphant logic which seemed to cut the knot of her mystery.

These things, it is said, cannot be explained; they are the initial and insoluble miracle. They are for us a practical fact and have to be accepted. We have to escape by a confusion out of a confusion. The individual soul can only cut the knot of ego by a supreme act of egoism, an exclusive attachment to its own individual salvation which amounts to an absolute assertion of its separate existence in Maya. We are led to regard other souls as if they were figments of our mind and their salvation unimportant, our soul alone as if it were entirely real and its salvation the one thing that matters. I come to regard my personal escape from bondage

as real while other souls who are equally myself remain behind in the bondage!

It is only when we put aside all irreconcilable antinomy between Self and the world that things fall into their place by a less paradoxical logic. We must accept the many-sidedness of the manifestation even while we assert the unity of the Manifested. And is not this after all the truth that pursues us wherever we cast our eyes, unless seeing we choose not to see? Is not this after all the perfectly natural and simple mystery of Conscious Being that it is bound neither by its unity nor by its multiplicity? It is "absolute" in the sense of being entirely free to include and arrange in its own way all possible terms of its self-expression. There is none bound, none freed, none seeking to be free, — for always That is a perfect freedom. It is so free that it is not even bound by its liberty. It can play at being bound without incurring a real bondage. Its chain is a self-imposed convention, its limitation in the ego a transitional device that it uses in order to repeat its transcendence and universality in the scheme of the individual Brahman.

The Transcendent, the Supracosmic is absolute and free in itself beyond Time and Space and beyond the conceptual opposites of finite and infinite. But in cosmos it uses its liberty of self-formation, its Maya, to make a scheme of itself in the complementary terms of unity and multiplicity, and this multiple unity it establishes in the three conditions of the subconscient, the conscient and the superconscient. For actually we see that the Many objectivised in form in our material universe start with a subconscious unity which expresses itself openly enough in cosmic action and cosmic substance, but of which they are not themselves superficially aware. In the conscient the ego becomes the superficial point at which the awareness of unity can emerge; but it applies its perception of unity to the form and surface action and, failing to take account of all that operates behind, fails also to realise that it is not only one in itself but one with others. This limitation of the universal "I" in the divided ego-sense constitutes our imperfect individualised personality. But when the ego transcends the personal consciousness, it begins to include and be overpowered by that which is to us superconscious; it becomes

aware of the cosmic unity and enters into the Transcendent Self which here cosmos expresses by a multiple oneness.

The liberation of the individual soul is therefore the keynote of the definite divine action; it is the primary divine necessity and the pivot on which all else turns. It is the point of Light at which the intended complete self-manifestation in the Many begins to emerge. But the liberated soul extends its perception of unity horizontally as well as vertically. Its unity with the transcendent One is incomplete without its unity with the cosmic Many. And that lateral unity translates itself by a multiplication, a reproduction of its own liberated state at other points in the Multiplicity. The divine soul reproduces itself in similar liberated souls as the animal reproduces itself in similar bodies. Therefore, whenever even a single soul is liberated, there is a tendency to an extension and even to an outburst of the same divine self-consciousness in other individual souls of our terrestrial humanity and, — who knows? — perhaps even beyond the terrestrial consciousness. Where shall we fix the limit of that extension? Is it altogether a legend which says of the Buddha that as he stood on the threshold of Nirvana, of the Non-Being, his soul turned back and took the vow never to make the irrevocable crossing so long as there was a single being upon earth undelivered from the knot of the suffering, from the bondage of the ego?

But we can attain to the highest without blotting ourselves out from the cosmic extension. Brahman preserves always Its two terms of liberty within and of formation without, of expression and of freedom from the expression. We also, being That, can attain to the same divine self-possession. The harmony of the two tendencies is the condition of all life that aims at being really divine. Liberty pursued by exclusion of the thing exceeded leads along the path of negation to the refusal of that which God has accepted. Activity pursued by absorption in the act and the energy leads to an inferior affirmation and the denial of the Highest. But what God combines and synthetises, wherefore should man insist on divorcing? To be perfect as He is perfect is the condition of His integral attainment.

Through Avidya, the Multiplicity, lies our path out of the transitional egoistic self-expression in which death and suffering

predominate; through Vidya consenting with Avidya by the perfect sense of oneness even in that multiplicity, we enjoy integrally the immortality and the beatitude. By attaining to the Unborn beyond all becoming we are liberated from this lower birth and death; by accepting the Becoming freely as the Divine, we invade mortality with the immortal beatitude and become luminous centres of its conscious self-expression in humanity.

CHAPTER VI

Man in the Universe

> The Soul of man, a traveller, wanders in this cycle of Brahman, huge, a totality of lives, a totality of states, thinking itself different from the Impeller of the journey. Accepted by Him, it attains its goal of Immortality.
>
> *Swetaswatara Upanishad.*[1]

THE progressive revelation of a great, a transcendent, a luminous Reality with the multitudinous relativities of this world that we see and those other worlds that we do not see as means and material, condition and field, this would seem then to be the meaning of the universe, — since meaning and aim it has and is neither a purposeless illusion nor a fortuitous accident. For the same reasoning which leads us to conclude that world-existence is not a deceptive trick of Mind, justifies equally the certainty that it is no blindly and helplessly self-existent mass of separate phenomenal existences clinging together and struggling together as best they can in their orbit through eternity, no tremendous self-creation and self-impulsion of an ignorant Force without any secret Intelligence within aware of its starting-point and its goal and guiding its process and its motion. An existence, wholly self-aware and therefore entirely master of itself, possesses the phenomenal being in which it is involved, realises itself in form, unfolds itself in the individual.

That luminous Emergence is the dawn which the Aryan forefathers worshipped. Its fulfilled perfection is that highest step of the world-pervading Vishnu which they beheld as if an eye of vision extended in the purest heavens of the Mind. For it exists already as an all-revealing and all-guiding Truth of things which watches over the world and attracts mortal man, first without the knowledge of his conscious mind, by the general march of Nature, but at last consciously by a progressive awakening and self-enlargement, to his divine ascension. The ascent to the divine Life is the human journey, the Work of works, the acceptable Sacrifice. This alone is man's real business in the world and the

[1] I. 6.

justification of his existence, without which he would be only an insect crawling among other ephemeral insects on a speck of surface mud and water which has managed to form itself amid the appalling immensities of the physical universe.

This Truth of things that has to emerge out of the phenomenal world's contradictions is declared to be an infinite Bliss and self-conscious Existence, the same everywhere, in all things, in all times and beyond Time, and aware of itself behind all these phenomena by whose intensest vibrations of activity or by whose largest totality it can never be entirely expressed or in any way limited; for it is self-existent and does not depend for its being upon its manifestations. They represent it, but do not exhaust it; point to it, but do not reveal it. It is revealed only to itself within their forms. The conscious existence involved in the form comes, as it evolves, to know itself by intuition, by self-vision, by self-experience. It becomes itself in the world by knowing itself; it knows itself by becoming itself. Thus possessed of itself inwardly, it imparts also to its forms and modes the conscious delight of Sachchidananda. This becoming of the infinite Bliss-Existence-Consciousness in mind and life and body, — for independent of them it exists eternally, — is the transfiguration intended and the utility of individual existence. Through the individual it manifests in relation even as of itself it exists in identity.

The Unknowable knowing itself as Sachchidananda is the one supreme affirmation of Vedanta; it contains all the others or on it they depend. This is the one veritable experience that remains when all appearances have been accounted for negatively by the elimination of their shapes and coverings or positively by the reduction of their names and forms to the constant truth that they contain. For fulfilment of life or for transcendence of life, and whether purity, calm and freedom in the spirit be our aim or puissance, joy and perfection, Sachchidananda is the unknown, omnipresent, indispensable term for which the human consciousness, whether in knowledge and sentiment or in sensation and action, is eternally seeking.

The universe and the individual are the two essential appearances into which the Unknowable descends and through which it has to be approached; for other intermediate collectivities are

born only of their interaction. This descent of the supreme Reality is in its nature a self-concealing; and in the descent there are successive levels, in the concealing successive veils. Necessarily, the revelation takes the form of an ascent; and necessarily also the ascent and the revelation are both progressive. For each successive level in the descent of the Divine is to man a stage in an ascension; each veil that hides the unknown God becomes for the God-lover and God-seeker an instrument of His unveiling. Out of the rhythmic slumber of material Nature unconscious of the Soul and the Idea that maintain the ordered activities of her energy even in her dumb and mighty material trance, the world struggles into the more quick, varied and disordered rhythm of Life labouring on the verges of self-consciousness. Out of Life it struggles upward into Mind in which the unit becomes awake to itself and its world, and in that awakening the universe gains the leverage it required for its supreme work, it gains self-conscious individuality. But Mind takes up the work to continue, not to complete it. It is a labourer of acute but limited intelligence who takes the confused materials offered by Life and, having improved, adapted, varied, classified according to its power, hands them over to the supreme Artist of our divine manhood. That Artist dwells in Supermind; for Supermind is Superman. Therefore our world has yet to climb beyond Mind to a higher principle, a higher status, a higher dynamism in which universe and individual become aware of and possess that which they both are and therefore stand explained to each other, in harmony with each other, unified.

The disorders of life and mind cease by discerning the secret of a more perfect order than the physical. Matter below life and mind contains in itself the balance between a perfect poise of tranquillity and the action of an immeasurable energy, but does not possess that which it contains. Its peace wears the dull mask of an obscure inertia, a sleep of unconsciousness or rather of a drugged and imprisoned consciousness. Driven by a force which is its real self but whose sense it cannot yet seize nor share, it has not the awakened joy of its own harmonious energies.

Life and mind awaken to the sense of this want in the form

of a striving and seeking ignorance and a troubled and baffled desire which are the first steps towards self-knowledge and self-fulfilment. But where then is the kingdom of their self-fulfilling? It comes to them by the exceeding of themselves. Beyond life and mind we recover consciously in its divine truth that which the balance of material Nature grossly represented, — a tranquillity which is neither inertia nor a sealed trance of consciousness but the concentration of an absolute force and an absolute self-awareness, and an action of immeasurable energy which is at the same time an out-thrilling of ineffable bliss because its every act is the expression, not of a want and an ignorant straining, but of an absolute peace and self-mastery. In that attainment our ignorance realises the light of which it was a darkened or a partial reflection; our desires cease in the plenitude and fulfilment towards which even in their most brute material forms they were an obscure and fallen aspiration.

The universe and the individual are necessary to each other in their ascent. Always indeed they exist for each other and profit by each other. Universe is a diffusion of the divine All in infinite Space and Time, the individual its concentration within limits of Space and Time. Universe seeks in infinite extension the divine totality it feels itself to be but cannot entirely realise; for in extension existence drives at a pluralistic sum of itself which can neither be the primal nor the final unit, but only a recurring decimal without end or beginning. Therefore it creates in itself a self-conscious concentration of the All through which it can aspire. In the conscious individual Prakriti turns back to perceive Purusha, World seeks after Self; God having entirely become Nature, Nature seeks to become progressively God.

On the other hand, it is by means of the universe that the individual is impelled to realise himself. Not only is it his foundation, his means, his field, the stuff of the divine Work; but also, since the concentration of the universal Life which he is takes place within limits and is not like the intensive unity of Brahman free from all conception of bound and term, he must necessarily universalise and impersonalise himself in order to manifest the divine All which is his reality. Yet is he called upon to preserve, even when he most extends himself in universality of conscious-

ness, a mysterious transcendent something of which his sense of personality gives him an obscure and egoistic representation. Otherwise he has missed his goal, the problem set to him has not been solved, the divine work for which he accepted birth has not been done.

The universe comes to the individual as Life, — a dynamism the entire secret of which he has to master and a mass of colliding results, a whirl of potential energies out of which he has to disengage some supreme order and some yet unrealised harmony. This is after all the real sense of man's progress. It is not merely a restatement in slightly different terms of what physical Nature has already accomplished. Nor can the ideal of human life be simply the animal repeated on a higher scale of mentality. Otherwise, any system or order which assured a tolerable well-being and a moderate mental satisfaction would have stayed our advance. The animal is satisfied with a modicum of necessity; the gods are content with their splendours. But man cannot rest permanently until he reaches some highest good. He is the greatest of living beings because he is the most discontented, because he feels most the pressure of limitations. He alone, perhaps, is capable of being seized by the divine frenzy for a remote ideal.

To the Life-Spirit, therefore, the individual in whom its potentialities centre is pre-eminently Man, the Purusha. It is the Son of Man who is supremely capable of incarnating God. This Man is the Manu, the thinker, the Manomaya Purusha, mental person or soul in mind of the ancient sages. No mere superior mammal is he, but a conceptive soul basing itself on the animal body in Matter. He is conscious Name or Numen accepting and utilising form as a medium through which Person can deal with substance. The animal life emerging out of Matter is only the inferior term of his existence. The life of thought, feeling, will, conscious impulsion, that which we name in its totality Mind, that which strives to seize upon Matter and its vital energies and subject them to the law of its own progressive transformation, is the middle term in which he takes his effectual station. But there is equally a supreme term which Mind in man searches after so that having found he may affirm it in his mental

and bodily existence. This practical affirmation of something essentially superior to his present self is the basis of the divine life in the human being.

Awakened to a profounder self-knowledge than his first mental idea of himself, Man begins to conceive some formula and to perceive some appearance of the thing that he has to affirm. But it appears to him as if poised between two negations of itself. If, beyond his present attainment, he perceives or is touched by the power, light, bliss of a self-conscious infinite existence and translates his thought or his experience of it into terms convenient for his mentality, — Infinity, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Immortality, Freedom, Love, Beatitude, God, — yet does this sun of his seeing appear to shine between a double Night, — a darkness below, a mightier darkness beyond. For when he strives to know it utterly, it seems to pass into something which neither any one of these terms nor the sum of them can at all represent. His mind at last negates God for a Beyond, or at least it seems to find God transcending Himself, denying Himself to the conception. Here also, in the world, in himself, and around himself, he is met always by the opposites of his affirmation. Death is ever with him, limitation invests his being and his experience, error, inconscience, weakness, inertia, grief, pain, evil are constant oppressors of his effort. Here also he is driven to deny God, or at least the Divine seems to negate or to hide itself in some appearance or outcome which is other than its true and eternal reality.

And the terms of this denial are not, like that other and remoter negation, inconceivable and therefore naturally mysterious, unknowable to his mind, but appear to be knowable, known, definite, — and still mysterious. He knows not what they are, why they exist, how they came into being. He sees their processes as they affect and appear to him; he cannot fathom their essential reality.

Perhaps they are unfathomable, perhaps they also are really unknowable in their essence? Or, it may be, they have no essential reality, — are an illusion, Asat, non-being. The superior Negation appears to us sometimes as a Nihil, a Non-Existence; this inferior negation may also be, in its essence, a Nihil, a non-

existence. But as we have already put away from us this evasion of the difficulty with regard to that higher, so also we discard it for this inferior Asat. To deny entirely its reality or to seek an escape from it as a mere disastrous illusion is to put away from us the problem and to shun our work. For Life, these things that seem to deny God, to be the opposites of Sachchidananda, are real, even if they turn out to be temporary. They and their opposites, good, knowledge, joy, pleasure, life, survival, strength, power, increase, are the very material of her workings.

It is probable indeed that they are the result or rather the inseparable accompaniments, not of an illusion, but of a wrong relation, wrong because it is founded on a false view of what the individual is in the universe and therefore a false attitude both towards God and Nature, towards self and environment. Because that which he has become is out of harmony both with what the world of his habitation is and what he himself should be and is to be, therefore man is subject to these contradictions of the secret Truth of things. In that case they are not the punishment of a fall, but the conditions of a progress. They are the first elements of the work he has to fulfil, the price he has to pay for the crown which he hopes to win, the narrow way by which Nature escapes out of Matter into consciousness; they are at once her ransom and her stock.

For out of these false relations and by their aid the true have to be found. By the Ignorance we have to cross over death. So too the Veda speaks cryptically of energies that are like women evil in impulse, wandering from the path, doing hurt to their Lord, which yet, though themselves false and unhappy, build up in the end "this vast Truth", the Truth that is the Bliss. It would be, then, not when he has excised the evil in Nature out of himself by an act of moral surgery or parted with life by an abhorrent recoil, but when he has turned Death into a more perfect life, lifted the small things of the human limitation into the great things of the divine vastness, transformed suffering into beatitude, converted evil into its proper good, translated error and falsehood into their secret truth that the sacrifice will be accomplished, the journey done and Heaven and Earth equalised join hands in the bliss of the Supreme.

Yet how can such contraries pass into each other? By what alchemy shall this lead of mortality be turned into that gold of divine Being? But if they are not in their essence contraries? If they are manifestations of one Reality, identical in substance? Then indeed a divine transmutation becomes conceivable.

We have seen that the Non-Being beyond may well be an inconceivable existence and perhaps an ineffable Bliss. At least the Nirvana of Buddhism which formulated one most luminous effort of man to reach and to rest in this highest Non-Existence, represents itself in the psychology of the liberated yet upon earth as an unspeakable peace and gladness; its practical effect is the extinction of all suffering through the disappearance of all egoistic idea or sensation and the nearest we can get to a positive conception of it is that it is some inexpressible Beatitude (if the name or any name can be applied to a peace so void of contents) into which even the notion of self-existence seems to be swallowed up and disappear. It is a Sachchidananda to which we dare no longer apply even the supreme terms of Sat, of Chit and of Ananda. For all terms are annulled and all cognitive experience is overpassed.

On the other hand, we have hazarded the suggestion that since all is one Reality, this inferior negation also, this other contradiction or non-existence of Sachchidananda is none other than Sachchidananda itself. It is capable of being conceived by the intellect, perceived in the vision, even received through the sensations as verily that which it seems to deny, and such would it always be to our conscious experience if things were not falsified by some great fundamental error, some possessing and compelling Ignorance, Maya or Avidya. In this sense a solution might be sought, not perhaps a satisfying metaphysical solution for the logical mind, — for we are standing on the border-line of the unknowable, the ineffable and straining our eyes beyond, — but a sufficient basis in experience for the practice of the divine life.

To do this we must dare to go below the clear surfaces of things on which the mind loves to dwell, to tempt the vast and obscure, to penetrate the unfathomable depths of consciousness and identify ourselves with states of being that are not our own.

Human language is a poor help in such a search, but at least we may find in it some symbols and figures, return with some just expressible hints which will help the light of the soul and throw upon the mind some reflection of the ineffable design.

CHAPTER VII

The Ego and the Dualities

> The soul seated on the same tree of Nature is absorbed and deluded and has sorrow because it is not the Lord, but when it sees and is in union with that other self and greatness of it which is the Lord, then sorrow passes away from it.
>
> *Swetaswatara Upanishad.*[1]

IF ALL is in truth Sachchidananda, death, suffering, evil, limitation can only be the creations, positive in practical effect, negative in essence, of a distorting consciousness which has fallen from the total and unifying knowledge of itself into some error of division and partial experience. This is the fall of man typified in the poetic parable of the Hebrew Genesis. That fall is his deviation from the full and pure acceptance of God and himself, or rather of God in himself, into a dividing consciousness which brings with it all the train of the dualities, life and death, good and evil, joy and pain, completeness and want, the fruit of a divided being. This is the fruit which Adam and Eve, Purusha and Prakriti, the soul tempted by Nature, have eaten. The redemption comes by the recovery of the universal in the individual and of the spiritual term in the physical consciousness. Then alone the soul in Nature can be allowed to partake of the fruit of the tree of life and be as the Divine and live for ever. For then only can the purpose of its descent into material consciousness be accomplished, when the knowledge of good and evil, joy and suffering, life and death has been accomplished through the recovery by the human soul of a higher knowledge which reconciles and identifies these opposites in the universal and transforms their divisions into the image of the divine Unity.

To Sachchidananda extended in all things in widest commonalty and impartial universality, death, suffering, evil and limitation can only be at the most reverse terms, shadow-forms of their luminous opposites. As these things are felt by us, they are

[1] IV. 7.

notes of a discord. They formulate separation where there should be a unity, miscomprehension where there should be an understanding, an attempt to arrive at independent harmonies where there should be a self-adaptation to the orchestral whole. All totality, even if it be only in one scheme of the universal vibrations, even if it be only a totality of the physical consciousness without possession of all that is in movement beyond and behind, must be to that extent a reversion to harmony and a reconciliation of jarring opposites. On the other hand, to Sachchidananda transcendent of the forms of the universe the dual terms themselves, even so understood, can no longer be justly applicable. Transcendence transfigures; it does not reconcile, but rather transmutes opposites into something surpassing them that effaces their oppositions.

At first, however, we must strive to relate the individual again to the harmony of the totality. There it is necessary for us, — otherwise there is no issue from the problem, — to realise that the terms in which our present consciousness renders the values of the universe, though practically justified for the purposes of human experience and progress, are not the sole terms in which it is possible to render them and may not be the complete, the right, the ultimate formulas. Just as there may be sense-organs or formations of sense-capacity which see the physical world differently and it may well be better, because more completely, than our sense-organs and sense-capacity, so there may be other mental and supramental envisagings of the universe which surpass our own. States of consciousness there are in which Death is only a change in immortal Life, pain a violent backwash of the waters of universal delight, limitation a turning of the Infinite upon itself, evil a circling of the good around its own perfection; and this not in abstract conception only, but in actual vision and in constant and substantial experience. To arrive at such states of consciousness may, for the individual, be one of the most important and indispensable steps of his progress towards self-perfection.

Certainly, the practical values given us by our senses and by the dualistic sense-mind must hold good in their field and be accepted as the standard for ordinary life-experience until a

larger harmony is ready into which they can enter and transform themselves without losing hold of the realities which they represent. To enlarge the sense-faculties without the knowledge that would give the old sense-values their right interpretation from the new standpoint might lead to serious disorders and incapacities, might unfit for practical life and for the orderly and disciplined use of the reason. Equally, an enlargement of our mental consciousness out of the experience of the egoistic dualities into an unregulated unity with some form of total consciousness might easily bring about a confusion and incapacity for the active life of humanity in the established order of the world's relativities. This, no doubt, is the root of the injunction imposed in the Gita on the man who has the knowledge not to disturb the life-basis and thought-basis of the ignorant; for, impelled by his example but unable to comprehend the principle of his action, they would lose their own system of values without arriving at a higher foundation.

Such a disorder and incapacity may be accepted personally and are accepted by many great souls as a temporary passage or as the price to be paid for the entry into a wider existence. But the right goal of human progress must be always an effective and synthetic reinterpretation by which the law of that wider existence may be represented in a new order of truths and in a more just and puissant working of the faculties on the life-material of the universe. For the senses the sun goes round the earth; that was for them the centre of existence and the motions of life are arranged on the basis of a misconception. The truth is the very opposite, but its discovery would have been of little use if there were not a science that makes the new conception the centre of a reasoned and ordered knowledge putting their right values on the perceptions of the senses. So also for the mental consciousness God moves round the personal ego and all His works and ways are brought to the judgment of our egoistic sensations, emotions and conceptions and are there given values and interpretations which, though a perversion and inversion of the truth of things, are yet useful and practically sufficient in a certain development of human life and progress. They are a rough practical systematisation of our experience of things valid so long as we dwell in a

certain order of ideas and activities. But they do not represent the last and highest state of human life and knowledge. "Truth is the path and not the falsehood." The truth is not that God moves round the ego as the centre of existence and can be judged by the ego and its view of the dualities, but that the Divine is itself the centre and that the experience of the individual only finds its own true truth when it is known in the terms of the universal and the transcendent. Nevertheless, to substitute this conception for the egoistic without an adequate base of knowledge may lead to the substitution of new but still false and arbitrary ideas for the old and bring about a violent instead of a settled disorder of right values. Such a disorder often marks the inception of new philosophies and religions and initiates useful revolutions. But the true goal is only reached when we can group round the right central conception a reasoned and effective knowledge in which the egoistic life shall rediscover all its values transformed and corrected. Then we shall possess that new order of truths which will make it possible for us to substitute a more divine life for the existence which we now lead and to effectualise a more divine and puissant use of our faculties on the life-material of the universe.

That new life and power of the human integer must necessarily repose on a realisation of the great verities which translate into our mode of conceiving things the nature of the divine existence. It must proceed through a renunciation by the ego of its false standpoint and false certainties, through its entry into a right relation and harmony with the totalities of which it forms a part and with the transcendences from which it is a descent, and through its perfect self-opening to a truth and a law that exceed its own conventions, — a truth that shall be its fulfilment and a law that shall be its deliverance. Its goal must be the abolition of those values which are the creations of the egoistic view of things; its crown must be the transcendence of limitation, ignorance, death, suffering and evil.

The transcendence, the abolition are not possible here on earth and in our human life if the terms of that life are necessarily bound to our present egoistic valuations. If life is in its nature individual phenomenon and not representation of a universal

existence and the breathing of a mighty Life-Spirit, if the dualities which are the response of the individual to its contacts are not merely a response but the very essence and condition of all living, if limitation is the inalienable nature of the substance of which our mind and body are formed, disintegration of death the first and last condition of all life, its end and its beginning, pleasure and pain the inseparable dual stuff of all sensation, joy and grief the necessary light and shade of all emotion, truth and error the two poles between which all knowledge must eternally move, then transcendence is only attainable by the abandonment of human life in a Nirvana beyond all existence or by attainment to another world, a heaven quite otherwise constituted than this material universe.

It is not very easy for the customary mind of man, always attached to its past and present associations, to conceive of an existence still human, yet radically changed in what are now our fixed circumstances. We are in respect to our possible higher evolution much in the position of the original Ape of the Darwinian theory. It would have been impossible for that Ape leading his instinctive arboreal life in primeval forests to conceive that there would be one day an animal on the earth who would use a new faculty called reason upon the materials of his inner and outer existence, who would dominate by that power his instincts and habits, change the circumstances of his physical life, build for himself houses of stone, manipulate Nature's forces, sail the seas, ride the air, develop codes of conduct, evolve conscious methods for his mental and spiritual development. And if such a conception had been possible for the Ape-mind, it would still have been difficult for him to imagine that by any progress of Nature or long effort of Will and tendency he himself could develop into that animal. Man, because he has acquired reason and still more because he has indulged his power of imagination and intuition, is able to conceive an existence higher than his own and even to envisage his personal elevation beyond his present state into that existence. His idea of the supreme state is an absolute of all that is positive to his own concepts and desirable to his own instinctive aspiration, — Knowledge without its negative shadow of error, Bliss without its negation in experience of suffer-

ing, Power without its constant denial by incapacity, purity and plenitude of being without the opposing sense of defect and limitation. It is so that he conceives his gods; it is so that he constructs his heavens. But it is not so that his reason conceives of a possible earth and a possible humanity. His dream of God and Heaven is really a dream of his own perfection; but he finds the same difficulty in accepting its practical realisation here for his ultimate aim as would the ancestral Ape if called upon to believe in himself as the future Man. His imagination, his religious aspirations may hold that end before him; but when his reason asserts itself, rejecting imagination and transcendent intuition, he puts it by as a brilliant superstition contrary to the hard facts of the material universe. It becomes then only his inspiring vision of the impossible. All that is possible is a conditioned, limited and precarious knowledge, happiness, power and good.

Yet in the principle of reason itself there is the assertion of a Transcendence. For reason is in its whole aim and essence the pursuit of Knowledge, the pursuit, that is to say, of Truth by the elimination of error. Its view, its aim is not that of a passage from a greater to a lesser error, but it supposes a positive, preexistent Truth towards which through the dualities of right knowledge and wrong knowledge we can progressively move. If our reason has not the same instinctive certitude with regard to the other aspirations of humanity, it is because it lacks the same essential illumination inherent in its own positive activity. We can just conceive of a positive or absolute realisation of happiness, because the heart to which that instinct for happiness belongs has its own form of certitude, is capable of faith, and because our minds can envisage the elimination of unsatisfied want which is the apparent cause of suffering. But how shall we conceive of the elimination of pain from nervous sensation or of death from the life of the body? Yet the rejection of pain is a sovereign instinct of the sensations, the rejection of death a dominant claim inherent in the essence of our vitality. But these things present themselves to our reason as instinctive aspirations, not as realisable potentialities.

Yet the same law should hold throughout. The error of the practical reason is an excessive subjection to the apparent fact

which it can immediately feel as real and an insufficient courage in carrying profounder facts of potentiality to their logical conclusion. What is, is the realisation of an anterior potentiality; present potentiality is a clue to future realisation. And here potentiality exists; for the mastery of phenomena depends upon a knowledge of their causes and processes and if we know the causes of error, sorrow, pain, death, we may labour with some hope towards their elimination. For knowledge is power and mastery.

In fact, we do pursue as an ideal, so far as we may, the elimination of all these negative or adverse phenomena. We seek constantly to minimise the causes of error, pain and suffering. Science, as its knowledge increases, dreams of regulating birth and of indefinitely prolonging life, if not of effecting the entire conquest of death. But because we envisage only external or secondary causes, we can only think of removing them to a distance and not of eliminating the actual roots of that against which we struggle. And we are thus limited because we strive towards secondary perceptions and not towards root-knowledge, because we know processes of things, but not their essence. We thus arrive at a more powerful manipulation of circumstances, but not at essential control. But if we could grasp the essential nature and the essential cause of error, suffering and death, we might hope to arrive at a mastery over them which should be not relative but entire. We might hope even to eliminate them altogether and justify the dominant instinct of our nature by the conquest of that absolute good, bliss, knowledge and immortality which our intuitions perceive as the true and ultimate condition of the human being.

The ancient Vedanta presents us with such a solution in the conception and experience of Brahman as the one universal and essential fact and of the nature of Brahman as Sachchidananda.

In this view the essence of all life is the movement of a universal and immortal existence, the essence of all sensation and emotion is the play of a universal and self-existent delight in being, the essence of all thought and perception is the radiation of a universal and all-pervading truth, the essence of all activity is the progression of a universal and self-effecting good.

But the play and movement embodies itself in a multiplicity of forms, a variation of tendencies, an interplay of energies. Multiplicity permits of the interference of a determinative and temporarily deformative factor, the individual ego; and the nature of the ego is a self-limitation of consciousness by a willed ignorance of the rest of its play and its exclusive absorption in one form, one combination of tendencies, one field of the movement of energies. Ego is the factor which determines the reactions of error, sorrow, pain, evil, death; for it gives these values to movements which would otherwise be represented in their right relation to the one Existence, Bliss, Truth and Good. By recovering the right relation we may eliminate the ego-determined reactions, reducing them eventually to their true values; and this recovery can be effected by the right participation of the individual in the consciousness of the totality and in the consciousness of the transcendent which the totality represents.

Into later Vedanta there crept and arrived at fixity the idea that the limited ego is not only the cause of the dualities, but the essential condition for the existence of the universe. By getting rid of the ignorance of the ego and its resultant limitations we do indeed eliminate the dualities, but we eliminate along with them our existence in the cosmic movement. Thus we return to the essentially evil and illusory nature of human existence and the vanity of all effort after perfection in the life of the world. A relative good linked always to its opposite is all that here we can seek. But if we adhere to the larger and profounder idea that the ego is only an intermediate representation of something beyond itself, we escape from this consequence and are able to apply Vedanta to fulfilment of life and not only to the escape from life. The essential cause and condition of universal existence is the Lord, Ishwara or Purusha, manifesting and occupying individual and universal forms. The limited ego is only an intermediate phenomenon of consciousness necessary for a certain line of development. Following this line the individual can arrive at that which is beyond himself, that which he represents, and can yet continue to represent it, no longer as an obscured and limited ego, but as a centre of the Divine and of the universal consciousness embracing, utilising and transforming into

harmony with the Divine all individual determinations.

We have then the manifestation of the divine Conscious Being in the totality of physical Nature as the foundation of human existence in the material universe. We have the emergence of that Conscious Being in an involved and inevitably evolving Life, Mind and Supermind as the condition of our activities; for it is this evolution which has enabled man to appear in Matter and it is this evolution which will enable him progressively to manifest God in the body, — the universal Incarnation. We have in egoistic formation the intermediate and decisive factor which allows the One to emerge as the conscious Many out of that indeterminate totality general, obscure and formless which we call the subconscient, — *hṛdya samudra*, the ocean heart in things of the Rig Veda. We have the dualities of life and death, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, truth and error, good and evil as the first formations of egoistic consciousness, the natural and inevitable outcome of its attempt to realise unity in an artificial construction of itself exclusive of the total truth, good, life and delight of being in the universe. We have the dissolution of this egoistic construction by the self-opening of the individual to the universe and to God as the means of that supreme fulfilment to which egoistic life is only a prelude even as animal life was only a prelude to the human. We have the realisation of the All in the individual by the transformation of the limited ego into a conscious centre of the divine unity and freedom as the term at which the fulfilment arrives. And we have the outflowing of the infinite and absolute Existence, Truth, Good and Delight of being on the Many in the world as the divine result towards which the cycles of our evolution move. This is the supreme birth which maternal Nature holds in herself; of this she strives to be delivered.

CHAPTER VIII

The Methods of Vedantic Knowledge

> This secret Self in all beings is not apparent, but it is seen by means of the supreme reason, the subtle, by those who have the subtle vision.
>
> *Katha Upanishad.*[1]

BUT what then is the working of this Sachchidananda in the world and by what process of things are the relations between itself and the ego which figures it first formed, then led to their consummation? For on those relations and on the process they follow depend the whole philosophy and practice of a divine life for man.

We arrive at the conception and at the knowledge of a divine existence by exceeding the evidence of the senses and piercing beyond the walls of the physical mind. So long as we confine ourselves to sense-evidence and the physical consciousness, we can conceive nothing and know nothing except the material world and its phenomena. But certain faculties in us enable our mentality to arrive at conceptions which we may indeed deduce by ratiocination or by imaginative variation from the facts of the physical world as we see them, but which are not warranted by any purely physical data or any physical experience. The first of these instruments is the pure reason.

Human reason has a double action, mixed or dependent, pure or sovereign. Reason accepts a mixed action when it confines itself to the circle of our sensible experience, admits its law as the final truth and concerns itself only with the study of phenomenon, that is to say, with the appearances of things in their relations, processes and utilities. This rational action is incapable of knowing what is, it only knows what appears to be, it has no plummet by which it can sound the depths of being, it can only survey the field of becoming. Reason, on the other hand, asserts its pure action, when accepting our sensible experiences as a starting-point but refusing to be limited by them it goes behind,

[1] I. 3. 12.

judges, works in its own right and strives to arrive at general and unalterable concepts which attach themselves not to the appearances of things, but to that which stands behind their appearances. It may arrive at its result by direct judgment passing immediately from the appearance to that which stands behind it and in that case the concept arrived at may seem to be a result of the sensible experience and dependent upon it though it is really a perception of reason working in its own right. But the perceptions of the pure reason may also — and this is their more characteristic action — use the experience from which they start as a mere excuse and leave it far behind before they arrive at their result, so far that the result may seem the direct contrary of that which our sensible experience wishes to dictate to us. This movement is legitimate and indispensable, because our normal experience not only covers only a small part of universal fact, but even in the limits of its own field uses instruments that are defective and gives us false weights and measures. It must be exceeded, put away to a distance and its insistences often denied if we are to arrive at more adequate conceptions of the truth of things. To correct the errors of the sense-mind by the use of reason is one of the most valuable powers developed by man and the chief cause of his superiority among terrestrial beings.

The complete use of pure reason brings us finally from physical to metaphysical knowledge. But the concepts of metaphysical knowledge do not in themselves fully satisfy the demand of our integral being. They are indeed entirely satisfactory to the pure reason itself, because they are the very stuff of its own existence. But our nature sees things through two eyes always, for it views them doubly as idea and as fact and therefore every concept is incomplete for us and to a part of our nature almost unreal until it becomes an experience. But the truths which are now in question, are of an order not subject to our normal experience. They are, in their nature, "beyond the perception of the senses but seizable by the perception of the reason". Therefore, some other faculty of experience is necessary by which the demand of our nature can be fulfilled and this can only come, since we are dealing with the supraphysical, by an extension of psychological experience.

In a sense all our experience is psychological since even what we receive by the senses has no meaning or value to us till it is translated into the terms of the sense-mind, the Manas of Indian philosophical terminology. Manas, say our philosophers, is the sixth sense. But we may even say that it is the only sense and that the others, vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste are merely specialisations of the sense-mind which, although it normally uses the sense-organs for the basis of its experience, yet exceeds them and is capable of a direct experience proper to its own inherent action. As a result psychological experience, like the cognitions of the reason, is capable in man of a double action, mixed or dependent, pure or sovereign. Its mixed action takes place usually when the mind seeks to become aware of the external world, the object; the pure action when it seeks to become aware of itself, the subject. In the former activity, it is dependent on the senses and forms its perceptions in accordance with their evidence; in the latter it acts in itself and is aware of things directly by a sort of identity with them. We are thus aware of our emotions; we are aware of anger, as has been acutely said, because we become anger. We are thus aware also of our own existence; and here the nature of experience as knowledge by identity becomes apparent. In reality, all experience is in its secret nature knowledge by identity; but its true character is hidden from us because we have separated ourselves from the rest of the world by exclusion, by the distinction of ourself as subject and everything else as object, and we are compelled to develop processes and organs by which we may again enter into communion with all that we have excluded. We have to replace direct knowledge through conscious identity by an indirect knowledge which appears to be caused by physical contact and mental sympathy. This limitation is a fundamental creation of the ego and an instance of the manner in which it has proceeded throughout, starting from an original falsehood and covering over the true truth of things by contingent falsehoods which become for us practical truths of relation.

From this nature of mental and sense knowledge as it is at present organised in us, it follows that there is no inevitable necessity in our existing limitations. They are the result of an

evolution in which mind has accustomed itself to depend upon certain physiological functionings and their reactions as its normal means of entering into relation with the material universe. Therefore, although it is the rule that when we seek to become aware of the external world, we have to do so indirectly through the sense-organs and can experience only so much of the truth about things and men as the senses convey to us, yet this rule is merely the regularity of a dominant habit. It is possible for the mind, — and it would be natural for it, if it could be persuaded to liberate itself from its consent to the domination of matter, — to take direct cognisance of the objects of sense without the aid of the sense-organs. This is what happens in experiments of hypnosis and cognate psychological phenomena. Because our waking consciousness is determined and limited by the balance between mind and matter worked out by life in its evolution, this direct cognisance is usually impossible in our ordinary waking state and has therefore to be brought about by throwing the waking mind into a state of sleep which liberates the true or subliminal mind. Mind is then able to assert its true character as the one and all-sufficient sense and free to apply to the objects of sense its pure and sovereign instead of its mixed and dependent action. Nor is this extension of faculty really impossible but only more difficult in our waking state, — as is known to all who have been able to go far enough in certain paths of psychological experiment.

The sovereign action of the sense-mind can be employed to develop other senses besides the five which we ordinarily use. For instance, it is possible to develop the power of appreciating accurately without physical means the weight of an object which we hold in our hands. Here the sense of contact and pressure is merely used as a starting-point, just as the data of sense-experience are used by the pure reason, but it is not really the sense of touch which gives the measure of the weight to the mind; that finds the right value through its own independent perception and uses the touch only in order to enter into relation with the object. And as with the pure reason, so with the sense-mind, the sense-experience can be used as a mere first point from which it proceeds to a knowledge that has nothing to do

with the sense-organs and often contradicts their evidence. Nor is the extension of faculty confined only to outsides and superficies. It is possible, once we have entered by any of the senses into relation with an external object, so to apply the Manas as to become aware of the contents of the object, for example, to receive or to perceive the thoughts or feelings of others without aid from their utterance, gesture, action or facial expressions and even in contradiction of these always partial and often misleading data. Finally, by an utilisation of the inner senses, — that is to say, of the sense-powers, in themselves, in their purely mental or subtle activity as distinguished from the physical which is only a selection for the purposes of outward life from their total and general action, — we are able to take cognition of sense-experiences, of appearances and images of things other than those which belong to the organisation of our material environment. All these extensions of faculty, though received with hesitation and incredulity by the physical mind because they are abnormal to the habitual scheme of our ordinary life and experience, difficult to set in action, still more difficult to systematise so as to be able to make of them an orderly and serviceable set of instruments, must yet be admitted, since they are the invariable result of any attempt to enlarge the field of our superficially active consciousness whether by some kind of untaught effort and casual ill-ordered effect or by a scientific and well-regulated practice.

None of them, however, leads to the aim we have in view, the psychological experience of those truths that are "beyond perception by the sense but seizable by the perceptions of the reason"[1], *buddhigrāhyam atīndriyam*.[1] They give us only a larger field of phenomena and more effective means for the observation of phenomena. The truth of things always escapes beyond the sense. Yet is it a sound rule inherent in the very constitution of universal existence that where there are truths attainable by the reason, there must be somewhere in the organism possessed of that reason a means of arriving at or verifying them by experience. The one means we have left in our mentality is an extension of that form of knowledge by identity which gives us the awareness of our own existence. It is really upon a self-awareness

[1] *Gita*, VI. 21.

more or less conscient, more or less present to our conception that the knowledge of the contents of our self is based. Or to put it in a more general formula, the knowledge of the contents is contained in the knowledge of the continent. If then we can extend our faculty of mental self-awareness to awareness of the Self beyond and outside us, Atman or Brahman of the Upanishads, we may become possessors in experience of the truths which form the contents of the Atman or Brahman in the universe. It is on this possibility that Indian Vedanta has based itself. It has sought through knowledge of the Self the knowledge of the universe.

But always mental experience and the concepts of the reason have been held by it to be even at their highest a reflection in mental identifications and not the supreme self-existent identity. We have to go beyond the mind and the reason. The reason active in our waking consciousness is only a mediator between the subconscient All that we come from in our evolution upwards and the superconscient All towards which we are impelled by that evolution. The subconscient and the superconscient are two different formulations of the same All. The master-word of the subconscient is Life, the master-word of the superconscient is Light. In the subconscient knowledge or consciousness is involved in action, for action is the essence of Life. In the superconscient action re-enters into Light and no longer contains involved knowledge but is itself contained in a supreme consciousness. Intuitional knowledge is that which is common between them and the foundation of intuitional knowledge is conscious or effective identity between that which knows and that which is known; it is that state of common self-existence in which the knower and the known are one through knowledge. But in the subconscient the intuition manifests itself in the action, in effectivity, and the knowledge or conscious identity is either entirely or more or less concealed in the action. In the superconscient, on the contrary, Light being the law and the principle, the intuition manifests itself in its true nature as knowledge emerging out of conscious identity, and effectivity of action is rather the accompaniment or necessary consequent and no longer masks as the primary fact. Between these two states reason and mind act as

intermediaries which enable the being to liberate knowledge out of its imprisonment in the act and prepare it to resume its essential primacy. When the self-awareness in the mind applied, both to continent and content, to own-self and other-self, exalts itself into the luminous self-manifest identity, the reason also converts itself into the form of the self-luminous intuitional[1] knowledge. This is the highest possible state of our knowledge when mind fulfils itself in the supramental.

Such is the scheme of the human understanding upon which the conclusions of the most ancient Vedanta were built. To develop the results arrived at on this foundation by the ancient sages is not my object, but it is necessary to pass briefly in review some of their principal conclusions so far as they affect the problem of the divine Life with which alone we are at present concerned. For it is in those ideas that we shall find the best previous foundation of that which we seek now to rebuild and although, as with all knowledge, old expression has to be replaced to a certain extent by new expression suited to a later mentality and old light has to merge itself into new light as dawn succeeds dawn, yet it is with the old treasure as our initial capital or so much of it as we can recover that we shall most advantageously proceed to accumulate the largest gains in our new commerce with the ever-changeless and ever-changing Infinite.

Sat Brahman, Existence pure, indefinable, infinite, absolute, is the last concept at which Vedantic analysis arrives in its view of the universe, the fundamental Reality which Vedantic experience discovers behind all the movement and formation which constitute the apparent reality. It is obvious that when we posit this conception, we go entirely beyond what our ordinary consciousness, our normal experience contains or warrants. The senses and sense-mind know nothing whatever about any pure or absolute existence. All that our sense-experience tells us of, is form and movement. Forms exist, but with an existence that is not pure, rather always mixed, combined, aggregated, relative.

[1] I use the word "intuition" for want of a better. In truth, it is a makeshift and inadequate to the connotation demanded of it. The same has to be said of the word "consciousness" and many others which our poverty compels us to extend illegitimately in their significance.

When we go within ourselves, we may get rid of precise form, but we cannot get rid of movement, of change. Motion of Matter in Space, motion of change in Time seem to be the condition of existence. We may say indeed, if we like, that this is existence and that the idea of existence in itself corresponds to no discoverable reality. At the most in the phenomenon of self-awareness or behind it, we get sometimes a glimpse of something immovable and immutable, something that we vaguely perceive or imagine that we are beyond all life and death, beyond all change and formation and action. Here is the one door in us that sometimes swings open upon the splendour of a truth beyond and, before it shuts again, allows a ray to touch us, — a luminous intimation which, if we have the strength and firmness, we may hold to in our faith and make a starting-point for another play of consciousness than that of the sense-mind, for the play of Intuition.

For if we examine carefully, we shall find that Intuition is our first teacher. Intuition always stands veiled behind our mental operations. Intuition brings to man those brilliant messages from the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge. Reason only comes in afterwards to see what profit it can have of the shining harvest. Intuition gives us that idea of something behind and beyond all that we know and seem to be which pursues man always in contradiction of his lower reason and all his normal experience and impels him to formulate that formless perception in the more positive ideas of God, Immortality, Heaven and the rest by which we strive to express it to the mind. For Intuition is as strong as Nature herself from whose very soul it has sprung and cares nothing for the contradictions of reason or the denials of experience. It knows what is because it is, because itself it is of that and has come from that, and will not yield it to the judgment of what merely becomes and appears. What the Intuition tells us of, is not so much Existence as the Existent, for it proceeds from that one point of light in us which gives it its advantage, that sometimes opened door in our own self-awareness. Ancient Vedanta seized this message of the Intuition and formulated it in the three great declarations of the Upanishads, "I am He", "Thou art That, O Swetaketu", "All this is the Brahman; this Self is the Brahman".

But Intuition by the very nature of its action in man, working as it does from behind the veil, active principally in his more unenlightened, less articulate parts, served in front of the veil, in the narrow light which is our waking conscience, only by instruments that are unable fully to assimilate its messages, — Intuition is unable to give us the truth in that ordered and articulated form which our nature demands. Before it could effect any such completeness of direct knowledge in us, it would have to organise itself in our surface being and take possession there of the leading part. But in our surface being it is not the Intuition, it is the Reason which is organised and helps us to order our perceptions, thoughts and actions. Therefore the age of intuitive knowledge, represented by the early Vedantic thinking of the Upanishads, had to give place to the age of rational knowledge; inspired Scripture made room for metaphysical philosophy, even as afterwards metaphysical philosophy had to give place to experimental Science. Intuitive thought which is a messenger from the superconscient and therefore our highest faculty, was supplanted by the pure reason which is only a sort of deputy and belongs to the middle heights of our being; pure reason in its turn was supplanted for a time by the mixed action of the reason which lives on our plains and lower elevations and does not in its view exceed the horizon of the experience that the physical mind and senses or such aids as we can invent for them can bring to us. And this process which seems to be a descent, is really a circle of progress. For in each case the lower faculty is compelled to take up as much as it can assimilate of what the higher had already given and to attempt to re-establish it by its own methods. By the attempt it is itself enlarged in its scope and arrives eventually at a more supple and a more ample self-accommodation to the higher faculties. Without this succession and attempt at separate assimilation we should be obliged to remain under the exclusive domination of a part of our nature while the rest remained either depressed and unduly subjected or separate in its field and therefore poor in its development. With this succession and separate attempt the balance is righted; a more complete harmony of our parts of knowledge is prepared.

We see this succession in the Upanishads and the subsequent

Indian philosophies. The sages of the Veda and Vedanta relied entirely upon intuition and spiritual experience. It is by an error that scholars sometimes speak of great debates or discussions in the Upanishad. Wherever there is the appearance of a controversy, it is not by discussion, by dialectics or the use of logical reasoning that it proceeds, but by a comparison of intuitions and experiences in which the less luminous gives place to the more luminous, the narrower, faultier or less essential to the more comprehensive, more perfect, more essential. The question asked by one thinker of another is "What dost thou know?", not "What dost thou think?" nor "To what conclusion has thy reasoning arrived?" Nowhere in the Upanishads do we find any trace of logical reasoning urged in support of the truths of Vedanta. Intuition, the sages seem to have held, must be corrected by a more perfect intuition; logical reasoning cannot be its judge.

And yet the human reason demands its own method of satisfaction. Therefore when the age of rationalistic speculation began, Indian philosophers, respectful of the heritage of the past, adopted a double attitude towards the Truth they sought. They recognised in the Sruti, the earlier results of Intuition or, as they preferred to call it, of inspired Revelation, an authority superior to Reason. But at the same time they started from Reason and tested the results it gave them, holding only those conclusions to be valid which were supported by the supreme authority. In this way they avoided to a certain extent the besetting sin of metaphysics, the tendency to battle in the clouds because it deals with words as if they were imperative facts instead of symbols which have always to be carefully scrutinised and brought back constantly to the sense of that which they represent. Their speculations tended at first to keep near at the centre to the highest and profoundest experience and proceeded with the united consent of the two great authorities, Reason and Intuition. Nevertheless, the natural trend of Reason to assert its own supremacy triumphed in effect over the theory of its subordination. Hence the rise of conflicting schools each of which founded itself in theory on the Veda and used its texts as a weapon against the others. For the highest intuitive Knowledge sees things in the whole, in the large and details only as sides of the indivisible whole; its

tendency is towards immediate synthesis and the unity of knowledge. Reason, on the contrary, proceeds by analysis and division and assembles its facts to form a whole; but in the assemblage so formed there are opposites, anomalies, logical incompatibilities, and the natural tendency of Reason is to affirm some and to negate others which conflict with its chosen conclusions so that it may form a flawlessly logical system. The unity of the first intuitional knowledge was thus broken up and the ingenuity of the logicians was always able to discover devices, methods of interpretation, standards of varying value by which inconvenient texts of the Scripture could be practically annulled and an entire freedom acquired for their metaphysical speculation.

Nevertheless, the main conceptions of the earlier Vedanta remained in parts in the various philosophical systems and efforts were made from time to time to recombine them into some image of the old catholicity and unity of intuitional thought. And behind the thought of all, variously presented, survived as the fundamental conception, Purusha, Atman or Sat Brahman, the pure Existent of the Upanishads, often rationalised into an idea or psychological state, but still carrying something of its old burden of inexpressible reality. What may be the relation of the movement of becoming which is what we call the world to this absolute Unity and how the ego, whether generated by the movement or cause of the movement, can return to that true Self, Divinity or Reality declared by the Vedanta, these were the questions speculative and practical which have always occupied the thought of India.

CHAPTER IX

The Pure Existent

One indivisible that is pure existence.

Chhandogya Upanishad.[1]

WHEN we withdraw our gaze from its egoistic preoccupation with limited and fleeting interests and look upon the world with dispassionate and curious eyes that search only for the Truth, our first result is the perception of a boundless energy of infinite existence, infinite movement, infinite activity pouring itself out in limitless Space, in eternal Time, an existence that surpasses infinitely our ego or any ego or any collectivity of egos, in whose balance the grandiose products of aeons are but the dust of a moment and in whose incalculable sum numberless myriads count only as a petty swarm. We instinctively act and feel and weave our life thoughts as if this stupendous world movement were at work around us as centre and for our benefit, for our help or harm, or as if the justification of our egoistic cravings, emotions, ideas, standards were its proper business even as they are our own chief concern. When we begin to see, we perceive that it exists for itself, not for us, has its own gigantic aims, its own complex and boundless idea, its own vast desire or delight that it seeks to fulfil, its own immense and formidable standards which look down as if with an indulgent and ironic smile at the pettiness of ours. And yet let us not swing over to the other extreme and form too positive an idea of our own insignificance. That too would be an act of ignorance and the shutting of our eyes to the great facts of the universe.

For this boundless Movement does not regard us as unimportant to it. Science reveals to us how minute is the care, how cunning the device, how intense the absorption it bestows upon the smallest of its works even as on the largest. This mighty energy is an equal and impartial mother, *samam brahma*, in the great term of the Gita, and its intensity and force of movement is the same in the formation and upholding of a system of suns and

[1] VI. 2. 1.

the organisation of the life of an ant-hill. It is the illusion of size, of quantity that induces us to look on the one as great, the other as petty. If we look, on the contrary, not at mass of quantity but force of quality, we shall say that the ant is greater than the solar system it inhabits and man greater than all inanimate Nature put together. But this again is the illusion of quality. When we go behind and examine only the intensity of the movement of which quality and quantity are aspects, we realise that this Brahman dwells equally in all existences. Equally partaken of by all in its being, we are tempted to say, equally distributed to all in its energy. But this too is an illusion of quantity. Brahman dwells in all, indivisible, yet as if divided and distributed. If we look again with an observing perception not dominated by intellectual concepts, but informed by intuition and culminating in knowledge by identity, we shall see that the consciousness of this infinite Energy is other than our mental consciousness, that it is indivisible and gives, not an equal part of itself, but its whole self at one and the same time to the solar system and to the ant-hill. To Brahman there are no whole and parts, but each thing is all itself and benefits by the whole of Brahman. Quality and quantity differ, the self is equal. The form and manner and result of the force of action vary infinitely, but the eternal, primal, infinite energy is the same in all. The force of strength that goes to make the strong man is no whit greater than the force of weakness that goes to make the weak. The energy spent is as great in repression as in expression, in negation as in affirmation, in silence as in sound.

Therefore the first reckoning we have to mend is that between this infinite Movement, this energy of existence which is the world and ourselves. At present we keep a false account. We are infinitely important to the All, but to us the All is negligible; we alone are important to ourselves. This is the sign of the original ignorance which is the root of the ego, that it can only think with itself as centre as if it were the All, and of that which is not itself accepts only so much as it is mentally disposed to acknowledge or as it is forced to recognise by the shocks of its environment. Even when it begins to philosophise, does it not assert that the world only exists in and by its consciousness? Its own

state of consciousness or mental standards are to it the test of reality; all outside its orbit or view tends to become false or non-existent. This mental self-sufficiency of man creates a system of false accountantship which prevents us from drawing the right and full value from life. There is a sense in which these pretensions of the human mind and ego repose on a truth, but this truth only emerges when the mind has learned its ignorance and the ego has submitted to the All and lost in it its separate self-assertion. To recognise that we, or rather the results and appearances we call ourselves, are only a partial movement of this infinite Movement and that it is that infinite which we have to know, to be consciously and to fulfil faithfully, is the commencement of true living. To recognise that in our true selves we are one with the total movement and not minor or subordinate is the other side of the account, and its expression in the manner of our being, thought, emotion and action is necessary to the culmination of a true or divine living.

But to settle the account we have to know what is this All, this infinite and omnipotent energy. And here we come to a fresh complication. For it is asserted to us by the pure reason and it seems to be asserted to us by Vedanta that as we are subordinate and an aspect of this Movement, so the movement is subordinate and an aspect of something other than itself, of a great timeless, spaceless Stability, *sthāṇu*, which is immutable, inexhaustible and unexpended, not acting though containing all this action, not energy, but pure existence. Those who see only this world-energy can declare indeed that there is no such thing: our idea of an eternal stability, an immutable pure existence is a fiction of our intellectual conceptions starting from a false idea of the stable: for there is nothing that is stable; all is movement and our conception of the stable is only an artifice of our mental consciousness by which we secure a standpoint for dealing practically with the movement. It is easy to show that this is true in the movement itself. There is nothing there that is stable. All that appears to be stationary is only a block of movement, a formulation of energy at work which so affects our consciousness that it seems to be still, somewhat as the earth seems to us to be still, somewhat as a train in which we are travelling seems to be

still in the midst of a rushing landscape. But is it equally true that underlying this movement, supporting it, there is nothing that is moveless and immutable? Is it true that existence consists only in the action of energy? Or is it not rather that energy is an output of Existence?

We see at once that if such an Existence is, it must be, like the Energy, infinite. Neither reason nor experience nor intuition nor imagination bears witness to us of the possibility of a final terminus. All end and beginning presuppose something beyond the end or beginning. An absolute end, an absolute beginning is not only a contradiction in terms, but a contradiction of the essence of things, a violence, a fiction. Infinity imposes itself upon the appearances of the finite by its ineffugable self-existence.

But this is infinity with regard to Time and Space, an eternal duration, interminable extension. The pure Reason goes farther and looking in its own colourless and austere light at Time and Space points out that these two are categories of our consciousness, conditions under which we arrange our perception of phenomenon. When we look at existence in itself, Time and Space disappear. If there is any extension, it is not a spatial but a psychological extension; if there is any duration, it is not a temporal but a psychological duration; and it is then easy to see that this extension and duration are only symbols which represent to the mind something not translatable into intellectual terms, an eternity which seems to us the same all-containing ever-new moment, an infinity which seems to us the same all-containing all-pervading point without magnitude. And this conflict of terms, so violent, yet accurately expressive of something we do perceive, shows that mind and speech have passed beyond their natural limits and are striving to express a Reality in which their own conventions and necessary oppositions disappear into an ineffable identity.

But is this a true record? May it not be that Time and Space so disappear merely because the existence we are regarding is a fiction of the intellect, a fantastic Nihil created by speech, which we strive to erect into a conceptual reality? We regard again that Existence-in-itself and we say, No. There is something behind the phenomenon not only infinite but indefinable. Of no pheno-

menon, of no totality of phenomena can we say that absolutely it is. Even if we reduce all phenomena to one fundamental, universal irreducible phenomenon of movement or energy, we get only an indefinable phenomenon. The very conception of movement carries with it the potentiality of repose and betrays itself as an activity of some existence; the very idea of energy in action carries with it the idea of energy abstaining from action; and an absolute energy not in action is simply and purely absolute existence. We have only these two alternatives, either an indefinable pure existence or an indefinable energy in action and, if the latter alone is true, without any stable base or cause, then the energy is a result and phenomenon generated by the action, the movement which alone is. We have then no Existence, or we have the Nihil of the Buddhists with existence as only an attribute of an eternal phenomenon, of Action, of Karma, of Movement. This, asserts the pure reason, leaves my perceptions unsatisfied, contradicts my fundamental seeing, and therefore cannot be. For it brings us to a last abruptly ceasing stair of an ascent which leaves the whole staircase without support, suspended in the Void.

If this indefinable, infinite, timeless, spaceless Existence is, it is necessarily a pure absolute. It cannot be summed up in any quantity or quantities, it cannot be composed of any quality or combination of qualities. It is not an aggregate of forms or a formal substratum of forms. If all forms, quantities, qualities were to disappear, this would remain. Existence without quantity, without quality, without form is not only conceivable, but it is the one thing we can conceive behind these phenomena. Necessarily, when we say it is without them, we mean that it exceeds them, that it is something into which they pass in such a way as to cease to be what we call form, quality, quantity and out of which they emerge as form, quality and quantity in the movement. They do not pass away into one form, one quality, one quantity which is the basis of all the rest, — for there is none such, — but into something which cannot be defined by any of these terms. So all things that are conditions and appearances of the movement pass into That from which they have come and there, so far as they exist, become something that can no

longer be described by the terms that are appropriate to them in the movement. Therefore we say that the pure existence is an Absolute and in itself unknowable by our thought although we can go back to it in a supreme identity that transcends the terms of knowledge. The movement, on the contrary, is the field of the relative and yet by the very definition of the relative all things in the movement contain, are contained in and are the Absolute. The relation of the phenomena of Nature to the fundamental ether which is contained in them, constitutes them, contains them and yet is so different from them that entering into it they cease to be what they now are, is the illustration given by the Vedanta as most nearly representing this identity in difference between the Absolute and the relative.

Necessarily, when we speak of things passing into that from which they have come, we are using the language of our temporal consciousness and must guard ourselves against its illusions. The emergence of the movement from the Immutable is an eternal phenomenon and it is only because we cannot conceive it in that beginningless, endless, ever-new moment which is the eternity of the Timeless that our notions and perceptions are compelled to place it in a temporal eternity of successive duration to which are attached the ideas of an always recurrent beginning, middle and end.

But all this, it may be said, is valid only so long as we accept the concepts of pure reason and remain subject to them. But the concepts of reason have no obligatory force. We must judge of existence not by what we mentally conceive, but by what we see to exist. And the purest, freest form of insight into existence as it is shows us nothing but movement. Two things alone exist, movement in Space, movement in Time, the former objective, the latter subjective. Extension is real, duration is real, Space and Time are real. Even if we can go behind extension in Space and perceive it as a psychological phenomenon, as an attempt of the mind to make existence manageable by distributing the indivisible whole in a conceptual Space, yet we cannot go behind the movement of succession and change in Time. For that is the very stuff of our consciousness. We are and the world is a movement that continually progresses and

increases by the inclusion of all the successions of the past in a present which represents itself to us as the beginning of all the successions of the future, — a beginning, a present that always eludes us because it is not, for it has perished before it is born. What is, is the eternal, indivisible succession of Time carrying on its stream a progressive movement of consciousness also indivisible.[1] Duration then, eternally successive movement and change in Time, is the sole absolute. Becoming is the only being.

In reality, this opposition of actual insight into being to the conceptual fictions of the pure Reason is fallacious. If indeed intuition in this matter were really opposed to intelligence, we could not confidently support a merely conceptual reasoning against fundamental insight. But this appeal to intuitive experience is incomplete. It is valid only so far as it proceeds and it errs by stopping short of the integral experience. So long as the intuition fixes itself only upon that which we become, we see ourselves as a continual progression of movement and change in consciousness in the eternal succession of Time. We are the river, the flame of the Buddhist illustration. But there is a supreme experience and supreme intuition by which we go back behind our surface self and find that this becoming, change, succession are only a mode of our being and that there is that in us which is not involved at all in the becoming. Not only can we have the intuition of this that is stable and eternal in us, not only can we have the glimpse of it in experience behind the veil of continually fleeting becomings, but we can draw back into it and live in it entirely, so effecting an entire change in our external life, and in our attitude, and in our action upon the movement of the world. And this stability in which we can so live is precisely that which the pure Reason has already given us, although it can be arrived at without reasoning at all, without knowing previously what it is, — it is pure existence, eternal, infinite, indefinable, not affected by the succession of Time, not involved

[1] Indivisible in the totality of the movement. Each moment of Time or Consciousness may be considered as separate from its predecessor and successor, each successive action of Energy as a new quantum or new creation; but this does not abrogate continuity without which there would be no duration of Time or coherence of consciousness. A man's steps as he walks or runs or leaps are separate, but there is something that takes the steps and makes the movement continuous.

in the extension of Space, beyond form, quantity, quality, — Self only and absolute.

The pure existent is then a fact and no mere concept; it is the fundamental reality. But, let us hasten to add, the movement, the energy, the becoming are also a fact, also a reality. The supreme intuition and its corresponding experience may correct the other, may go beyond, may suspend, but do not abolish it. We have therefore two fundamental facts of pure existence and of world-existence, a fact of Being, a fact of Becoming. To deny one or the other is easy; to recognise the facts of consciousness and find out their relation is the true and fruitful wisdom.

Stability and movement, we must remember, are only our psychological representations of the Absolute, even as are oneness and multitude. The Absolute is beyond stability and movement as it is beyond unity and multiplicity. But it takes its eternal poise in the one and the stable and whirls round itself infinitely, inconceivably, securely in the moving and multitudinous. World-existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva which multiplies the body of the God numberlessly to the view: it leaves that white existence precisely where and what it was, ever is and ever will be; its sole absolute object is the joy of the dancing.

But as we cannot describe or think out the Absolute in itself, beyond stability and movement, beyond unity and multitude, — nor is that at all our business, — we must accept the double fact, admit both Shiva and Kali and seek to know what is this measureless Movement in Time and Space with regard to that timeless and spaceless pure Existence, one and stable, to which measure and measurelessness are inapplicable. We have seen what pure Reason, intuition and experience have to say about pure Existence, about Sat; what have they to say about Force, about Movement, about Shakti?

And the first thing we have to ask ourselves is whether that Force is simply force, simply an unintelligent energy of movement or whether the consciousness which seems to emerge out of it in this material world we live in, is not merely one of its phenomenal results but rather its own true and secret nature. In Vedantic terms, is Force simply Prakriti, only a movement of

action and process, or is Prakriti really power of Chit, in its nature force of creative self-conscience? On this essential problem all the rest hinges.

CHAPTER X

Conscious Force

> They beheld the self-force of the Divine Being deep hidden by its own conscious modes of working.
>
> *Swetaswatara Upanishad.*[1]
>
> This is he that is awake in those who sleep.
>
> *Katha Upanishad.*[2]

ALL phenomenal existence resolves itself into Force, into a movement of energy that assumes more or less material, more or less gross or subtle forms for self-presentation to its own experience. In the ancient images by which human thought attempted to make this origin and law of being intelligible and real to itself, this infinite existence of Force was figured as a sea, initially at rest and therefore free from forms, but the first disturbance, the first initiation of movement necessitates the creation of forms and is the seed of a universe.

Matter is the presentation of force which is most easily intelligible to our intelligence, moulded as it is by contacts in Matter to which a mind involved in material brain gives the response. The elementary state of material Force is, in the view of the old Indian physicists, a condition of pure material extension in Space of which the peculiar property is vibration typified to us by the phenomenon of sound. But vibration in this state of ether is not sufficient to create forms. There must first be some obstruction in the flow of the Force ocean, some contraction and expansion, some interplay of vibrations, some impinging of force upon force so as to create a beginning of fixed relations and mutual effects. Material Force modifying its first ethereal status assumes a second, called in the old language the aerial, of which the special property is contact between force and force, contact that is the basis of all material relations. Still we have not as yet real forms but only varying forces. A sustaining principle is needed. This is provided by a third self-modification of the primitive Force of which the principle of light, electricity, fire and heat is for us the characteristic manifestation. Even then, we can have forms of

[1] I. 3. [2] II. 2. 8.

force preserving their own character and peculiar action, but not stable forms of Matter. A fourth state characterised by diffusion and a first medium of permanent attractions and repulsions, termed picturesquely water or the liquid state, and a fifth of cohesion, termed earth or the solid state, complete the necessary elements.

All forms of Matter of which we are aware, all physical things even to the most subtle, are built up by the combination of these five elements. Upon them also depends all our sensible experience; for by reception of vibration comes the sense of sound; by contact of things in a world of vibrations of Force the sense of touch; by the action of light in the forms hatched, outlined, sustained by the force of light and fire and heat the sense of sight; by the fourth element the sense of taste; by the fifth the sense of smell. All is essentially response to vibratory contacts between force and force. In this way the ancient thinkers bridged the gulf between pure Force and its final modifications and satisfied the difficulty which prevents the ordinary human mind from understanding how all these forms which are to his senses so real, solid and durable can be in truth only temporary phenomena and a thing like pure energy, to the senses non-existent, intangible and almost incredible, can be the one permanent cosmic reality.

The problem of consciousness is not solved by this theory; for it does not explain how the contact of vibrations of Force should give rise to conscious sensations. The Sankhyas or analytic thinkers posited therefore behind these five elements two principles which they called Mahat and Ahankara, principles which are really non-material; for the first is nothing but the vast cosmic principle of Force and the other the divisional principle of Ego-formation. Nevertheless, these two principles, as also the principle of intelligence, become active in consciousness not by virtue of Force itself, but by virtue of an inactive Conscious-Soul or souls in which its activities are reflected and by that reflection assume the hue of consciousness.

Such is the explanation of things offered by the school of Indian philosophy which comes nearest to the modern materialistic ideas and which carried the idea of a mechanical or

unconscious Force in Nature as far as was possible to a seriously reflective Indian mind. Whatever its defects, its main idea was so indisputable that it came to be generally accepted. However the phenomenon of consciousness may be explained, whether Nature be an inert impulse or a conscious principle, it is certainly Force; the principle of things is a formative movement of energies, all forms are born of meeting and mutual adaptation between unshaped forces, all sensation and action is a response of something in a form of Force to the contacts of other forms of Force. This is the world as we experience it and from this experience we must always start.

Physical analysis of Matter by modern Science has come to the same general conclusion, even if a few last doubts still linger. Intuition and experience confirm this concord of Science and Philosophy. Pure reason finds in it the satisfaction of its own essential conceptions. For even in the view of the world as essentially an act of consciousness, an act is implied and in the act movement of Force, play of Energy. This also, when we examine from within our own experience, proves to be the fundamental nature of the world. All our activities are the play of the triple force of the old philosophies, knowledge-force, desire-force, action-force, and all these prove to be really three streams of one original and identical Power, Adya Shakti. Even our states of rest are only equable state or equilibrium of the play of her movement.

Movement of Force being admitted as the whole nature of the Cosmos, two questions arise. And first, how did this movement come to take place at all in the bosom of existence? If we suppose it to be not only eternal but the very essence of all existence, the question does not arise. But we have negatived this theory. We are aware of an existence which is not compelled by the movement. How then does this movement alien to its eternal repose come to take place in it? by what cause? by what possibility? by what mysterious impulsion?

The answer most approved by the ancient Indian mind was that Force is inherent in Existence. Shiva and Kali, Brahman and Shakti are one and not two who are separable. Force inherent in existence may be at rest or it may be in motion, but

when it is at rest, it exists none the less and is not abolished, diminished or in any way essentially altered. This reply is so entirely rational and in accordance with the nature of things that we need not hesitate to accept it. For it is impossible, because contradictory of reason, to suppose that Force is a thing alien to the one and infinite existence and entered into it from outside or was non-existent and arose in it at some point in Time. Even the Illusionist theory must admit that Maya, the power of self-illusion in Brahman, is potentially eternal in eternal Being and then the sole question is its manifestation or non-manifestation. The Sankhya also asserts the eternal coexistence of Prakriti and Purusha, Nature and Conscious-Soul, and the alternative states of rest or equilibrium of Prakriti and movement or disturbance of equilibrium.

But since Force is thus inherent in existence and it is the nature of Force to have this double or alternative potentiality of rest and movement, that is to say, of self-concentration in Force and self-diffusion in Force, the question of the how of the movement, its possibility, initiating impulsion or impelling cause does not arise. For we can easily, then, conceive that this potentiality must translate itself either as an alternative rhythm of rest and movement succeeding each other in Time or else as an eternal self-concentration of Force in immutable existence with a superficial play of movement, change and formation like the rising and falling of waves on the surface of the ocean. And this superficial play — we are necessarily speaking in inadequate images — may be either coeval with the self-concentration and itself also eternal or it may begin and end in Time and be resumed by a sort of constant rhythm; it is then not eternal in continuity but eternal in recurrence.

The problem of the how thus eliminated, there presents itself the question of the why. Why should this possibility of a play of movement of Force translate itself at all? why should not Force of existence remain eternally concentrated in itself, infinite, free from all variation and formation? This question also does not arise if we assume Existence to be non-conscious and consciousness only a development of material energy which we wrongly suppose to be immaterial. For then we can say simply

that this rhythm is the nature of Force in existence and there is absolutely no reason to seek for a why, a cause, an initial motive or a final purpose for that which is in its nature eternally self-existent. We cannot put that question to eternal self-existence and ask it either why it exists or how it came into existence; neither can we put it to self-force of existence and its inherent nature of impulsion to movement. All that we can then inquire into is its manner of self-manifestation, its principles of movement and formation, its process of evolution. Both Existence and Force being inert, — inert status and inert impulsion, — both of them unconscious and unintelligent, there cannot be any purpose or final goal in evolution or any original cause or intention.

But if we suppose or find Existence to be conscious Being, the problem arises. We may indeed suppose a conscious Being which is subject to its nature of Force, compelled by it and without option as to whether it shall manifest in the universe or remain unmanifest. Such is the cosmic God of the Tantriks and the Mayavadins who is subject to Shakti or Maya, Purusha involved in Maya or controlled by Shakti. But it is obvious that such a God is not the supreme infinite Existence with which we have started. Admittedly, it is only a formulation of Brahman in the cosmos by the Brahman which is itself logically anterior to Shakti or Maya and takes her back into its transcendental being when she ceases from her works. In a conscious existence which is absolute, independent of its formations, not determined by its works, we must suppose an inherent freedom to manifest or not to manifest the potentiality of movement. A Brahman compelled by Prakriti is not Brahman, but an inert Infinite with an active content in it more powerful than the continent, a conscious hold of Force of whom his Force is master. If we say that it is compelled by itself as Force, by its own nature, we do not get rid of the contradiction, the evasion of our first postulate. We have got back to an Existence which is really nothing but Force, Force at rest or in movement, absolute Force perhaps, but not absolute Being.

It is then necessary to examine into the relation between Force and Consciousness. But what do we mean by the latter

term? Ordinarily we mean by it our first obvious idea of a mental waking consciousness such as is possessed by the human being during the major part of his bodily existence, when he is not asleep, stunned or otherwise deprived of his physical and superficial methods of sensation. In this sense it is plain enough that consciousness is the exception and not the rule in the order of the material universe. We ourselves do not always possess it. But this vulgar and shallow idea of the nature of consciousness, though it still colours our ordinary thought and associations, must now definitely disappear out of philosophical thinking. For we know that there is something in us which is conscious when we sleep, when we are stunned or drugged or in a swoon, in all apparently unconscious states of our physical being. Not only so, but we may now be sure that the old thinkers were right when they declared that even in our waking state what we call then our consciousness is only a small selection from our entire conscious being. It is a superficies, it is not even the whole of our mentality. Behind it, much vaster than it, there is a subliminal or subconscient mind which is the greater part of ourselves and contains heights and profundities which no man has yet measured or fathomed. This knowledge gives us a starting-point for the true science of Force and its workings; it delivers us definitely from circumscription by the material and from the illusion of the obvious.

Materialism indeed insists that, whatever the extension of consciousness, it is a material phenomenon inseparable from our physical organs and not their utiliser but their result. This orthodox contention, however, is no longer able to hold the field against the tide of increasing knowledge. Its explanations are becoming more and more inadequate and strained. It is becoming always clearer that not only does the capacity of our total consciousness far exceed that of our organs, the senses, the nerves, the brain, but that even for our ordinary thought and consciousness these organs are only their habitual instruments and not their generators. Consciousness uses the brain which its upward strivings have produced, brain has not produced nor does it use the consciousness. There are even abnormal instances which go to prove that our organs are not entirely indispensable instruments, — that the heart-beats are not absolutely essential

to life, any more than is breathing, nor the organised brain-cells to thought. Our physical organism no more causes or explains thought and consciousness than the construction of an engine causes or explains the motive-power of steam or electricity. The force is anterior, not the physical instrument.

Momentous logical consequences follow. In the first place we may ask whether, since even mental consciousness exists where we see inanimation and inertia, it is not possible that even in material objects a universal subconscient mind is present although unable to act or communicate itself to its surfaces for want of organs. Is the material state an emptiness of consciousness, or is it not rather only a sleep of consciousness — even though from the point of view of evolution an original and not an intermediate sleep? And by sleep the human example teaches us that we mean not a suspension of consciousness, but its gathering inward away from conscious physical response to the impacts of external things. And is not this what all existence is that has not yet developed means of outward communication with the external physical world? Is there not a Conscious Soul, a Purusha who wakes for ever even in all that sleeps?

We may go farther. When we speak of subconscious mind, we should mean by the phrase a thing not different from the outer mentality, but only acting below the surface, unknown to the waking man, in the same sense if perhaps with a deeper plunge and a larger scope. But the phenomena of the subliminal self far exceed the limits of any such definition. It includes an action not only immensely superior in capacity, but quite different in kind from what we know as mentality in our waking self. We have therefore a right to suppose that there is a superconscient in us as well as a subconscient, a range of conscious faculties and therefore an organisation of consciousness which rise high above that psychological stratum to which we give the name of mentality. And since the subliminal self in us thus rises in superconscience above mentality, may it not also sink in subconscience below mentality? Are there not in us and in the world forms of consciousness which are submental, to which we can give the name of vital and physical consciousness? If so, we must suppose in the plant and the metal

give the name of consciousness although it is not the human or animal mentality for which we have hitherto preserved the monopoly of that description.

Not only is this probable but, if we will consider things dispassionately, it is certain. In ourselves there is such a vital consciousness which acts in the cells of the body and the automatic vital functions so that we go through purposeful movements and obey attractions and repulsions to which our mind is a stranger. In animals this vital consciousness is an even more important factor. In plants it is intuitively evident. The seekings and shrinkings of the plant, its pleasure and pain, its sleep and its wakefulness and all that strange life whose truth an Indian scientist has brought to light by rigidly scientific methods, are all movements of consciousness, but, as far as we can see, not of mentality. There is then a sub-mental, a vital consciousness which has precisely the same initial reactions as the mental, but is different in the constitution of its self-experience, even as that which is superconscient is in the constitution of its self-experience different from the mental being.

Does the range of what we can call consciousness cease with the plant, with that in which we recognise the existence of a sub-animal life? If so, we must then suppose that there is a force of life and consciousness originally alien to Matter which has yet entered into and occupied Matter, — perhaps from another world.[1] For whence, otherwise, can it have come? The ancient thinkers believed in the existence of such other worlds, which perhaps sustain life and consciousness in ours or even call it out by their pressure, but do not create it by their entry. Nothing can evolve out of Matter which is not therein already contained.

But there is no reason to suppose that the gamut of life and consciousness fails and stops short in that which seems to us purely material. The development of recent research and thought seems to point to a sort of obscure beginning of life and perhaps a sort of inert or suppressed consciousness in the metal and in the earth and in other "inanimate" forms, or at least the first stuff of

[1] The curious speculation is now current that Life entered earth not from another world, but from another planet. To the thinker that would explain nothing. The essential question is how Life comes into Matter at all and not how it enters into the matter of a particular planet.

what becomes consciousness in us may be there. Only while in the plant we can dimly recognise and conceive the thing that I have called vital consciousness, the consciousness of Matter, of the inert form, is difficult indeed for us to understand or imagine, and what we find it difficult to understand or imagine we consider it our right to deny. Nevertheless, when one has pursued consciousness so far into the depths, it becomes incredible that there should be this sudden gulf in Nature. Thought has a right to suppose a unity where that unity is confessed by all other classes of phenomena and in one class only, not denied, but merely more concealed than in others. And if we suppose the unity to be unbroken, we then arrive at the existence of consciousness in all forms of the Force which is at work in the world. Even if there be no conscient or superconscient Purusha inhabiting all forms, yet is there in those forms a conscious force of being of which even their outer parts overtly or inertly partake.

Necessarily, in such a view, the word consciousness changes its meaning. It is no longer synonymous with mentality but indicates a self-aware force of existence of which mentality is a middle term; below mentality it sinks into vital and material movements which are for us subconscient; above, it rises into the supramental which is for us the superconscient. But in all it is one and the same thing organising itself differently. This is, once more, the Indian conception of Chit which, as energy, creates the worlds. Essentially, we arrive at that unity which materialistic Science perceives from the other end when it asserts that Mind cannot be another force than Matter, but must be merely development and outcome of material energy. Indian thought at its deepest affirms on the other hand that Mind and Matter are rather different grades of the same energy, different organisations of one conscious Force of Existence.

But what right have we to assume consciousness as the just description for this Force? For consciousness implies some kind of intelligence, purposefulness, self-knowledge, even though they may not take the forms habitual to our mentality. Even from this point of view everything supports rather than contradicts the idea of a universal conscious Force. We see, for instance, in the animal, operations of a perfect purposefulness

and an exact, indeed a scientifically minute knowledge which are quite beyond the capacities of the animal mentality and which man himself can only acquire by long culture and education and even then uses with a much less sure rapidity. We are entitled to see in this general fact the proof of a conscious Force at work in the animal and the insect which is more intelligent, more purposeful, more aware of its intention, its ends, its means, its conditions than the highest mentality yet manifested in any individual form on earth. And in the operations of inanimate Nature we find the same pervading characteristic of a supreme hidden intelligence, "hidden in the modes of its own workings".

The only argument against a conscious and intelligent source for this purposeful work, this work of intelligence, of selection, adaptation and seeking is that large element in Nature's operations to which we give the name of waste. But obviously this is an objection based on the limitations of our human intellect which seeks to impose its own particular rationality, good enough for limited human ends, on the general operations of the World-Force. We see only part of Nature's purpose and all that does not subserve that part we call waste. Yet even our own human action is full of an apparent waste, so appearing from the individual point of view, which yet, we may be sure, subserves well enough the large and universal purpose of things. That part of her intention which we can detect, Nature gets done surely enough in spite of, perhaps really by virtue of her apparent waste. We may well trust to her in the rest which we do not yet detect.

For the rest, it is impossible to ignore the drive of set purpose, the guidance of apparent blind tendency, the sure eventual or immediate coming to the target sought, which characterise the operations of World-Force in the animal, in the plant, in inanimate things. So long as Matter was Alpha and Omega to the scientific mind, the reluctance to admit intelligence as the mother of intelligence was an honest scruple. But now it is no more than an outworn paradox to affirm the emergence of human consciousness, intelligence and mastery out of an unintelligent, blindly driving unconsciousness in which no form or substance of them previously existed. Man's consciousness can be nothing else than a form of Nature's consciousness. It is there in other

involved forms below Mind, it emerges in Mind, it shall ascend into yet superior forms beyond Mind. For the Force that builds the worlds is a conscious Force, the Existence which manifests itself in them is conscious Being and a perfect emergence of its potentialities in form is the sole object which we can rationally conceive for its manifestation of this world of forms.

CHAPTER XI

Delight of Existence: The Problem

> For who could live or breathe if there were not this delight of existence as the ether in which we dwell?
>
> From Delight all these beings are born, by Delight they exist and grow, to Delight they return.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[1]

BUT even if we accept this pure Existence, this Brahman, this Sat as the absolute beginning, end and continent of things and in Brahman an inherent self-consciousness inseparable from its being and throwing itself out as a force of movement of consciousness which is creative of forces, forms and worlds, we have yet no answer to the question "Why should Brahman, perfect, absolute, infinite, needing nothing, desiring nothing, at all throw out force of consciousness to create in itself these worlds of forms?" For we have put aside the solution that it is compelled by its own nature of Force to create, obliged by its own potentiality of movement and formation to move into forms. It is true that it has this potentiality, but it is not limited, bound or compelled by it; it is free. If, then, being free to move or remain eternally still, to throw itself into forms or retain the potentiality of form in itself, it indulges its power of movement and formation, it can be only for one reason, for delight.

This primary, ultimate and eternal Existence, as seen by the Vedantins, is not merely bare existence, or a conscious existence whose consciousness is crude force or power; it is a conscious existence the very term of whose being, the very term of whose consciousness is bliss. As in absolute existence there can be no nothingness, no night of inconscience, no deficiency, that is to say, no failure of Force, — for if there were any of these things, it would not be absolute, — so also there can be no suffering, no negation of delight. Absoluteness of conscious existence is illimitable bliss of conscious existence; the two are only different phrases for the same thing. All illimitableness, all infinity, all

[1] II. 7; III. 6.

absoluteness is pure delight. Even our relative humanity has this experience that all dissatisfaction means a limit, an obstacle, — satisfaction comes by realisation of something withheld, by the surpassing of the limit, the overcoming of the obstacle. This is because our original being is the absolute in full possession of its infinite and illimitable self-consciousness and self-power; a self-possession whose other name is self-delight. And in proportion as the relative touches upon that self-possession, it moves towards satisfaction, touches delight.

The self-delight of Brahman is not limited, however, by the still and motionless possession of its absolute self-being. Just as its force of consciousness is capable of throwing itself into forms infinitely and with an endless variation, so also its self-delight is capable of movement, of variation, of revelling in that infinite flux and mutability of itself represented by numberless teeming universes. To loose forth and enjoy this infinite movement and variation of its self-delight is the object of its extensive or creative play of Force.

In other words, that which has thrown itself out into forms is a triune Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, Sachchidananda, whose consciousness is in its nature a creative or rather a self-expressive Force capable of infinite variation in phenomenon and form of its self-conscious being and endlessly enjoying the delight of that variation. It follows that all things that exist are what they are as terms of that existence, terms of that conscious force, terms of that delight of being. Just as we find all things to be mutable forms of one immutable being, finite results of one infinite force, so we shall find that all things are variable self-expression of one invariable and all-embracing delight of self-existence. In everything that is, dwells the conscious force and it exists and is what it is by virtue of that conscious force; so also in everything that is there is the delight of existence and it exists and is what it is by virtue of that delight.

This ancient Vedantic theory of cosmic origin is immediately confronted in the human mind by two powerful contradictions, the emotional and sensational consciousness of pain and the ethical problem of evil. For if the world be an expression of Sachchidananda, not only of existence that is conscious-

force, — for that can easily be admitted, — but of existence that is also infinite self-delight, how are we to account for the universal presence of grief, of suffering, of pain? For this world appears to us rather as a world of suffering than as a world of the delight of existence. Certainly, that view of the world is an exaggeration, an error of perspective. If we regard it dispassionately and with a sole view to accurate and unemotional appreciation, we shall find that the sum of the pleasure of existence far exceeds the sum of the pain of existence, — appearances and individual cases to the contrary notwithstanding, — and that the active or passive, surface or underlying pleasure of existence is the normal state of nature, pain a contrary occurrence temporarily suspending or overlaying that normal state. But for that very reason the lesser sum of pain affects us more intensely and often looms larger than the greater sum of pleasure; precisely because the latter is normal, we do not treasure it, hardly even observe it unless it intensifies into some acuter form of itself, into a wave of happiness, a crest of joy or ecstasy. It is these things that we call delight and seek and the normal satisfaction of existence which is always there regardless of event and particular cause or object, affects us as something neutral which is neither pleasure nor pain. It is there, a great practical fact, for without it there would not be the universal and overpowering instinct of self-preservation, but it is not what we seek and therefore we do not enter it into our balance of emotional and sensational profit and loss. In that balance we enter only positive pleasures on one side and discomfort and pain on the other; pain affects us more intensely because it is abnormal to our being, contrary to our natural tendency and is experienced as an outrage on our existence, an offence and external attack on what we are and seek to be.

Nevertheless the abnormality of pain or its greater or lesser sum does not affect the philosophical issue; greater or less, its mere presence constitutes the whole problem. All being Sachchidananda, how can pain and suffering at all exist? This, the real problem, is often farther confused by a false issue starting from the idea of a personal extracosmic God and a partial issue, the ethical difficulty.

Sachchidananda, it may be reasoned, is God, is a conscious Being who is the author of existence; how then can God have created a world in which He inflicts suffering on His creatures, sanctions pain, permits evil? God being All-Good, who created pain and evil? If we say that pain is a trial and an ordeal, we do not solve the moral problem, we arrive at an immoral or non-moral God, — an excellent world-mechanist perhaps, a cunning psychologist, but not a God of Good and of Love whom we can worship, only a God of Might to whose law we must submit or whose caprice we may hope to propitiate. For one who invents torture as a means of test or ordeal, stands convicted either of deliberate cruelty or of moral insensibility and, if a moral being at all, is inferior to the highest instinct of his own creatures. And if to escape this moral difficulty, we say that pain is an inevitable result and natural punishment of moral evil, — an explanation which will not even square with the facts of life unless we admit the theory of Karma and rebirth by which the soul suffers now for antenatal sins in other bodies, — we still do not escape the very root of the ethical problem, — who created or why or whence was created that moral evil which entails the punishment of pain and suffering? And seeing that moral evil is in reality a form of mental disease or ignorance, who or what created this law or inevitable connection which punishes a mental disease or act of ignorance by a recoil so terrible, by tortures often so extreme and monstrous? The inexorable law of Karma is irreconcilable with a supreme moral and personal Deity, and therefore the clear logic of Buddha denied the existence of any free and all-governing personal God; all personality he declared to be a creation of ignorance and subject to Karma.

In truth, the difficulty thus sharply presented arises only if we assume the existence of an extracosmic personal God, not Himself the universe, one who has created good and evil, pain and suffering for His creatures, but Himself stands above and unaffected by them, watching, ruling, doing His will with a suffering and struggling world or, if not doing His will, if allowing the world to be driven by an inexorable law, unhelped by Him or inefficiently helped, then not God, not omnipotent, not all-good and all-loving. On no theory of an extracosmic moral God, can evil

and suffering be explained, — the creation of evil and suffering, — except by an unsatisfactory subterfuge which avoids the question at issue instead of answering it or a plain or implied Manicheanism which practically annuls the Godhead in attempting to justify its ways or excuse its works. But such a God is not the Vedantic Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda of the Vedanta is one existence without a second; all that is, is He. If then evil and suffering exist, it is He that bears the evil and suffering in the creature in whom He has embodied Himself. The problem then changes entirely. The question is no longer how came God to create for His creatures a suffering and evil of which He is Himself incapable and therefore immune, but how came the sole and infinite Existence-Consciousness-Bliss to admit into itself that which is not bliss, that which seems to be its positive negation.

Half of the moral difficulty — that difficulty in its one unanswerable form disappears. It no longer arises, can no longer be put. Cruelty to others, I remaining immune or even participating in their sufferings by subsequent repentance or belated pity, is one thing; self-infliction of suffering, I being the sole existence, is quite another. Still the ethical difficulty may be brought back in a modified form; All-Delight being necessarily all-good and all-love, how can evil and suffering exist in Sachchidananda, since he is not mechanical existence, but free and conscious being, free to condemn and reject evil and suffering? We have to recognise that the issue so stated is also a false issue because it applies the terms of a partial statement as if they were applicable to the whole. For the ideas of good and of love which we thus bring into the concept of the All-Delight spring from a dualistic and divisional conception of things; they are based entirely on the relations between creature and creature, yet we persist in applying them to a problem which starts, on the contrary, from the assumption of One who is all. We have to see first how the problem appears or how it can be solved in its original purity, on the basis of unity in difference; only then can we safely deal with its parts and its developments, such as the relations between creature and creature on the basis of division and duality.

We have to recognise, if we thus view the whole, not limiting ourselves to the human difficulty and the human standpoint, that we do not live in an ethical world. The attempt of human thought to force an ethical meaning into the whole of Nature is one of those acts of wilful and obstinate self-confusion, one of those pathetic attempts of the human being to read himself, his limited habitual human self into all things and judge them from the standpoint he has personally evolved, which most effectively prevent him from arriving at real knowledge and complete sight. Material Nature is not ethical; the law which governs it is a coordination of fixed habits which take no cognisance of good and evil, but only of force that creates, force that arranges and preserves, force that disturbs and destroys impartially, non-ethically, according to the secret Will in it, according to the mute satisfaction of that Will in its own self-formations and self-dissolutions. Animal or vital Nature is also non-ethical, although as it progresses it manifests the crude material out of which the higher animal evolves the ethical impulse. We do not blame the tiger because it slays and devours its prey any more than we blame the storm because it destroys or the fire because it tortures and kills; neither does the conscious-force in the storm, the fire or the tiger blame or condemn itself. Blame and condemnation, or rather self-blame and self-condemnation, are the beginning of true ethics. When we blame others without applying the same law to ourselves, we are not speaking with a true ethical judgment, but only applying the language ethics has evolved for us to an emotional impulse of recoil from or dislike of that which displeases or hurts us.

This recoil or dislike is the primary origin of ethics, but is not itself ethical. The fear of the deer for the tiger, the rage of the strong creature against its assailant is a vital recoil of the individual delight of existence from that which threatens it. In the progress of the mentality it refines itself into repugnance, dislike, disapproval. Disapproval of that which threatens and hurts us, approval of that which flatters and satisfies refine into the conception of good and evil to oneself, to the community, to others than ourselves, to other communities than ours, and finally into the general approval of good, the general disapproval of evil.

But, throughout, the fundamental nature of the thing remains the same. Man desires self-expression, self-development, in other words, the progressing play in himself of the conscious-force of existence; that is his fundamental delight. Whatever hurts that self-expression, self-development, satisfaction of his progressing self, is for him evil; whatever helps, confirms, raises, aggrandises, ennobles it is his good. Only, his conception of the self-development changes, becomes higher and wider, begins to exceed his limited personality, to embrace others, to embrace all in its scope.

In other words, ethics is a stage in evolution. That which is common to all stages is the urge of Sachchidananda towards self-expression. This urge is at first non-ethical, then infra-ethical in the animal, then in the intelligent animal even anti-ethical for it permits us to approve hurt done to others which we disapprove when done to ourselves. In this respect man even now is only half-ethical. And just as all below us is infra-ethical, so there may be that above us whither we shall eventually arrive, which is supra-ethical, has no need of ethics. The ethical impulse and attitude, so all-important to humanity, is a means by which it struggles out of the lower harmony and universality based upon inconscience and broken up by Life into individual discords towards a higher harmony and universality based upon conscient oneness with all existences. Arriving at that goal, this means will no longer be necessary or even possible, since the qualities and oppositions on which it depends will naturally dissolve and disappear in the final reconciliation.

If, then, the ethical standpoint applies only to a temporary though all-important passage from one universality to another, we cannot apply it to the total solution of the problem of the universe, but can only admit it as one element in that solution. To do otherwise is to run into the peril of falsifying all the facts of the universe, all the meaning of the evolution behind and beyond us in order to suit a temporary outlook and a half-evolved view of the utility of things. The world has three layers, infra-ethical, ethical and supra-ethical. We have to find that which is common to all; for only so can we resolve the problem.

That which is common to all is, we have seen, the satisfac-

tion of conscious-force of existence developing itself into forms and seeking in that development its delight. From that satisfaction or delight of self-existence it evidently began; for it is that which is normal to it, to which it clings, which it makes its base; but it seeks new forms of itself and in the passage to higher forms there intervenes the phenomenon of pain and suffering which seems to contradict the fundamental nature of its being. This and this alone is the root-problem.

How shall we solve it? Shall we say that Sachchidananda is not the beginning and end of things, but the beginning and end is Nihil, an impartial void, itself nothing but containing all potentialities of existence or non-existence, consciousness or non-consciousness, delight or undelight? We may accept this answer if we choose; but although we seek thereby to explain everything, we have really explained nothing, we have only included everything. A Nothing which is full of all potentialities is the most complete opposition of terms and things possible and we have therefore only explained a minor contradiction by a major, by driving the self-contradiction of things to their maximum. Nihil is the void, where there can be no potentialities; an impartial indeterminate of all potentialities is Chaos, and all that we have done is to put Chaos into the Void without explaining how it got there. Let us return, then, to our original conception of Sachchidananda and see whether on that foundation a completer solution is not possible.

We must first make it clear to ourselves that just as when we speak of universal consciousness we mean something different from, more essential and wider than the waking mental consciousness of the human being, so also when we speak of universal delight of existence we mean something different from, more essential and wider than the ordinary emotional and sensational pleasure of the individual human creature. Pleasure, joy and delight, as man uses the words, are limited and occasional movements which depend on certain habitual causes and emerge, like their opposites pain and grief which are equally limited and occasional movements, from a background other than themselves. Delight of being is universal, illimitable and self-existent, not dependent on particular causes, the background of all back-

grounds, from which pleasure, pain and other more neutral experiences emerge. When delight of being seeks to realise itself as delight of becoming, it moves in the movement of force and itself takes different forms of movement of which pleasure and pain are positive and negative currents. Subconscient in Matter, superconscient beyond Mind this delight seeks in Mind and Life to realise itself by emergence in the becoming, in the increasing self-consciousness of the movement. Its first phenomena are dual and impure, move between the poles of pleasure and pain, but it aims at its self-revelation in the purity of a supreme delight of being which is self-existent and independent of objects and causes. Just as Sachchidananda moves towards the realisation of the universal existence in the individual and of the form-exceeding consciousness in the form of body and mind, so it moves towards the realisation of universal, self-existent and objectless delight in the flux of particular experiences and objects. Those objects we now seek as stimulating causes of a transient pleasure and satisfaction; free, possessed of self, we shall not seek but shall possess them as reflectors rather than causes of a delight which eternally exists.

In the egoistic human being, the mental person emergent out of the dim shell of matter, delight of existence is neutral, semi-latent, still in the shadow of the subconscious, hardly more than a concealed soil of plenty covered by desire with a luxuriant growth of poisonous weeds and hardly less poisonous flowers, the pains and pleasures of our egoistic existence. When the divine conscious-force working secretly in us has devoured these growths of desire, when in the image of the Rig Veda the fire of God has burnt up the shoots of earth, that which is concealed at the roots of these pains and pleasures, their cause and secret being, the sap of delight in them, will emerge in new forms not of desire, but of self-existent satisfaction which will replace mortal pleasure by the Immortal's ecstasy. And this transformation is possible because these growths of sensation and emotion are in their essential being, the pains no less than the pleasures, that delight of existence which they seek but fail to reveal, — fail because of division, ignorance of self and egoism.

CHAPTER XII

Delight of Existence: The Solution

> The name of That is the Delight; as the Delight we must worship and seek after It.
>
> *Kena Upanishad.*[1]

IN THIS conception of an inalienable underlying delight of existence of which all outward or surface sensations are a positive, negative or neutral play, waves and foamings of that infinite deep, we arrive at the true solution of the problem we are examining. The self of things is an infinite indivisible existence; of that existence the essential nature or power is an infinite imperishable force of self-conscious being; and of that self-consciousness the essential nature or knowledge of itself is, again, an infinite inalienable delight of being. In formlessness and in all forms, in the eternal awareness of infinite and indivisible being and in the multiform appearances of finite division this self-existence preserves perpetually its self-delight. As in the apparent inconscience of Matter our soul, growing out of its bondage to its own superficial habit and particular mode of self-conscious existence, discovers that infinite Conscious-Force constant, immobile, brooding, so in the apparent non-sensation of Matter it comes to discover and attune itself to an infinite conscious Delight imperturbable, ecstatic, all-embracing. This delight is its own delight, this self is its own self in all; but to our ordinary view of self and things which awakes and moves only upon surfaces, it remains hidden, profound, subconscious. And as it is within all forms, so it is within all experiences whether pleasant, painful or neutral. There too hidden, profound, subconscious, it is that which enables and compels things to remain in existence. It is the reason of that clinging to existence, that overmastering will-to-be, translated vitally as the instinct of self-preservation, physically as the imperishability of matter, mentally as the sense of immortality which attends the formed existence through all its phases of self-development and of which even the occasional

[1] IV. 6.

impulse of self-destruction is only a reverse form, an attraction to other state of being and a consequent recoil from present state of being. Delight is existence, Delight is the secret of creation, Delight is the root of birth, Delight is the cause of remaining in existence, Delight is the end of birth and that into which creation ceases. "From Ananda," says the Upanishad, "all existences are born, by Ananda they remain in being and increase, to Ananda they depart."

As we look at these three aspects of essential Being, one in reality, triune to our mental view, separable only in appearance, in the phenomena of the divided consciousness, we are able to put in their right place the divergent formulae of the old philosophies so that they unite and become one, ceasing from their agelong controversy. For if we regard world-existence only in its appearances and only in its relation to pure, infinite, indivisible, immutable Existence, we are entitled to regard it, describe it and realise it as Maya. Maya in its original sense meant a comprehending and containing consciousness capable of embracing, measuring and limiting and therefore formative; it is that which outlines, measures out, moulds forms in the formless, psychologises and seems to make knowable the Unknowable, geometrises and seems to make measurable the limitless. Later the word came from its original sense of knowledge, skill, intelligence to acquire a pejorative sense of cunning, fraud or illusion, and it is in the figure of an enchantment or illusion that it is used by the philosophical systems.

World is Maya. World is not unreal in the sense that it has no sort of existence; for even if it were only a dream of the Self, still it would exist in It as a dream, real to It in the present even while ultimately unreal. Nor ought we to say that world is unreal in the sense that it has no kind of eternal existence; for although particular worlds and particular forms may or do dissolve physically and return mentally from the consciousness of manifestation into the non-manifestation, yet Form in itself, World in itself are eternal. From the non-manifestation they return inevitably into manifestation; they have an eternal recurrence if not an eternal persistence, an eternal immutability in sum and foundation along with an eternal mutability in aspect

and apparition. Nor have we any surety that there ever was or ever will be a period in Time when no form of universe, no play of being is represented to itself in the eternal Conscious-Being, but only an intuitive perception that the world that we know can and does appear from That and return into It perpetually.

Still world is Maya because it is not the essential truth of infinite existence, but only a creation of self-conscious being, — not a creation in the void, not a creation in nothing and out of nothing, but in the eternal Truth and out of the eternal Truth of that Self-being; its continent, origin and substance are the essential, real Existence, its forms are mutable formations of That to Its own conscious perception, determined by Its own creative conscious-force. They are capable of manifestation, capable of non-manifestation, capable of other-manifestation. We may, if we choose, call them therefore illusions of the infinite consciousness thus audaciously flinging back a shadow of our mental sense of subjection to error and incapacity upon that which, being greater than Mind, is beyond subjection to falsehood and illusion. But seeing that the essence and substance of Existence is not a lie and that all errors and deformations of our divided consciousness represent some truth of the indivisible self-conscious Existence, we can only say that the world is not essential truth of That, but phenomenal truth of Its free multiplicity and infinite superficial mutability and not truth of Its fundamental and immutable Unity.

If, on the other hand, we look at world-existence in relation to consciousness only and to force of consciousness, we may regard, describe and realise it as a movement of Force obeying some secret will or else some necessity imposed on it by the very existence of the Consciousness that possesses or regards it. It is then the play of Prakriti, the executive Force, to satisfy Purusha, the regarding and enjoying Conscious-Being or it is the play of Purusha reflected in the movements of Force and with them identifying himself. World, then, is the play of the Mother of things moved to cast Herself for ever into infinite forms and avid of eternally outpouring experiences.

Again if we look at World-Existence rather in its relation to the self-delight of eternally existent being, we may regard,

describe and realise it as Lila, the play, the child's joy, the poet's joy, the actor's joy, the mechanician's joy of the Soul of things eternally young, perpetually inexhaustible, creating and re-creating Himself in Himself for the sheer bliss of that self-creation, of that self-representation, — Himself the play, Himself the player, Himself the playground. These three generalisations of the play of existence in its relation to the eternal and stable, the immutable Sachchidananda, starting from the three conceptions of Maya, Prakriti and Lila and representing themselves in our philosophical systems as mutually contradictory philosophies, are in reality perfectly consistent with each other, complementary and necessary in their totality to an integral view of life and the world. The world of which we are a part is in its most obvious view a movement of Force; but that Force, when we penetrate its appearances, proves to be a constant and yet always mutable rhythm of creative consciousness casting up, projecting in itself phenomenal truths of its own infinite and eternal being; and this rhythm is in its essence, cause and purpose a play of the infinite delight of being ever busy with its own innumerable self-representations. This triple or triune view must be the starting-point for all our understanding of the universe.

Since, then, eternal and immutable delight of being moving out into infinite and variable delight of becoming is the root of the whole matter, we have to conceive one indivisible conscious Being behind all our experiences supporting them by its inalienable delight and effecting by its movement the variations of pleasure, pain and neutral indifference in our sensational existence. That is our real self; the mental being subject to the triple vibration can only be a representation of our real self put in front for the purposes of that sensational experience of things which is the first rhythm of our divided consciousness in its response and reaction to the multiple contacts of the universe. It is an imperfect response, a tangled and discordant rhythm preparing and preluding the full and unified play of the conscious Being in us; it is not the true and perfect symphony that may be ours if we can once enter into sympathy with the One in all variations and attune ourselves to the absolute and universal diapason.

If this view be right, then certain consequences inevitably impose themselves. In the first place, since in our depths we ourselves are that One, since in the reality of our being we are the indivisible All-Consciousness and therefore the inalienable All-Bliss, the disposition of our sensational experience in the three vibrations of pain, pleasure and indifference can only be a superficial arrangement created by that limited part of ourselves which is uppermost in our waking consciousness. Behind there must be something in us, — much vaster, profounder, truer than the superficial consciousness, — which takes delight impartially in all experiences; it is that delight which secretly supports the superficial mental being and enables it to persevere through all labours, sufferings and ordeals in the agitated movement of the Becoming. That which we call ourselves is only a trembling ray on the surface; behind is all the vast subconscient, the vast superconscient profiting by all these surface experiences and imposing them on its external self which it exposes as a sort of sensitive covering to the contacts of the world; itself veiled, it receives these contacts and assimilates them into the values of a truer, a profounder, a mastering and creative experience. Out of its depths it returns them to the surface in forms of strength, character, knowledge, impulsion whose roots are mysterious to us because our mind moves and quivers on the surface and has not learned to concentrate itself and live in the depths.

In our ordinary life this truth is hidden from us or only dimly glimpsed at times or imperfectly held and conceived. But if we learn to live within, we infallibly awaken to this presence within us which is our more real self, a presence profound, calm, joyous and puissant of which the world is not the master — a presence which, if it is not the Lord Himself, is the radiation of the Lord within. We are aware of it within supporting and helping the apparent and superficial self and smiling at its pleasures and pains as at the error and passion of a little child. And if we can go back into ourselves and identify ourselves, not with our superficial experience, but with that radiant penumbra of the Divine, we can live in that attitude towards the contacts of the world and, standing back in our entire consciousness from the pleasures and pains of the body, vital being and mind, possess

them as experiences whose nature being superficial does not touch or impose itself on our core and real being. In the entirely expressive Sanskrit terms, there is an *ānandamaya* behind the *manomaya*, a vast Bliss-Self behind the limited mental self, and the latter is only a shadowy image and disturbed reflection of the former. The truth of ourselves lies within and not on the surface.

Again this triple vibration of pleasure, pain, indifference, being superficial, being an arrangement and result of our imperfect evolution, can have in it no absoluteness, no necessity. There is no real obligation on us to return to a particular contact, a particular response of pleasure, pain or neutral reaction, there is only an obligation of habit. We feel pleasure or pain in a particular contact because that is the habit our nature has formed, because that is the constant relation the recipient has established with the contact. It is within our competence to return quite the opposite response, pleasure where we used to have pain, pain where we used to have pleasure. It is equally within our competence to accustom the superficial being to return instead of the mechanical reactions of pleasure, pain and indifference that free reply of inalienable delight which is the constant experience of the true and vast Bliss-Self within us. And this is a greater conquest, a still deeper and more complete self-possession than a glad and detached reception in the depths of the habitual reactions on the surface. For it is no longer a mere acceptance without subjection, a free acquiescence in imperfect values of experience, but enables us to convert imperfect into perfect, false into true values, — the constant but veritable delight of the Spirit in things taking the place of the dualities experienced by the mental being.

In the things of the mind this pure habitual relativity of the reactions of pleasure and pain is not difficult to perceive. The nervous being in us, indeed, is accustomed to a certain fixedness, a false impression of absoluteness in these things. To it victory, success, honour, good fortune of all kinds are pleasant things in themselves, absolutely, and must produce joy as sugar must taste sweet; defeat, failure, disappointment, disgrace, evil fortune of all kinds are unpleasant things in themselves, absolutely,

and must produce grief as wormwood must taste bitter. To vary these responses is to it a departure from fact, abnormal and morbid; for the nervous being is a thing enslaved to habit and in itself the means devised by Nature for fixing constancy of reaction, sameness of experience, the settled scheme of man's relations to life. The mental being on the other hand is free, for it is the means she has devised for flexibility and variation, for change and progress; it is subject only so long as it chooses to remain subject, to dwell in one mental habit rather than in another or so long as it allows itself to be dominated by its nervous instrument. It is not bound to be grieved by defeat, disgrace, loss: it can meet these things and all things with a perfect indifference; it can even meet them with a perfect gladness. Therefore man finds that the more he refuses to be dominated by his nerves and body, the more he draws back from implication of himself in his physical and vital parts, the greater is his freedom. He becomes the master of his own responses to the world's contacts, no longer the slave of external touches.

In regard to physical pleasure and pain, it is more difficult to apply the universal truth; for this is the very domain of the nerves and the body, the centre and seat of that in us whose nature is to be dominated by external contact and external pressure. Even here, however, we have glimpses of the truth. We see it in the fact that according to the habit the same physical contact can be either pleasurable or painful, not only to different individuals, but to the same individual under different conditions or at different stages of his development. We see it in the fact that men in periods of great excitement or high exaltation remain physically indifferent to pain or unconscious of pain under contacts which ordinarily would inflict severe torture or suffering. In many cases it is only when the nerves are able to reassert themselves and remind the mentality of its habitual obligation to suffer that the sense of suffering returns. But this return to the habitual obligation is not inevitable; it is only habitual. We see that in the phenomena of hypnosis not only can the hypnotised subject be successfully forbidden to feel the pain of a wound or puncture when in the abnormal state, but can be prevented with equal success from returning to his habitual reaction of suffering when

he is awakened. The reason of this phenomenon is perfectly simple; it is because the hypnotiser suspends the habitual waking consciousness which is the slave of nervous habits and is able to appeal to the subliminal mental being in the depths, the inner mental being who is master, if he wills, of the nerves and the body. But this freedom which is effected by hypnosis abnormally, rapidly, without true possession, by an alien will, may equally be won normally, gradually, with true possession, by one's own will so as to effect partially or completely a victory of the mental being over the habitual nervous reactions of the body.

Pain of mind and body is a device of Nature, that is to say, of Force in her works, meant to subserve a definite transitional end in her upward evolution. The world is from the point of view of the individual a play and complex shock of multitudinous forces. In the midst of this complex play the individual stands as a limited constructed being with a limited amount of force exposed to numberless shocks which may wound, maim, break up or disintegrate the construction which he calls himself. Pain is in the nature of a nervous and physical recoil from a dangerous or harmful contact; it is a part of what the Upanishad calls *jugupsā*, the shrinking of the limited being from that which is not himself and not sympathetic or in harmony with himself, its impulse of self-defence against "others". It is, from this point of view, an indication by Nature of that which has to be avoided or, if not successfully avoided, has to be remedied. It does not come into being in the purely physical world so long as life does not enter into it; for till then mechanical methods are sufficient. Its office begins when life with its frailty and imperfect possession of Matter enters on the scene; it grows with the growth of Mind in life. Its office continues so long as Mind is bound in the life and body which it is using, dependent upon them for its knowledge and means of action, subjected to their limitations and to the egoistic impulses and aims which are born of those limitations. But if and when Mind in man becomes capable of being free, unegoistic, in harmony with all other beings and with the play of the universal forces, the use and office of suffering diminishes, its *raison d'être* must finally cease to be and it can only continue as an atavism of Nature, a habit that

has survived its use, a persistence of the lower in the as yet imperfect organisation of the higher. Its eventual elimination must be an essential point in the destined conquest of the soul over subjection to Matter and egoistic limitation in Mind.

This elimination is possible because pain and pleasure themselves are currents, one imperfect, the other perverse, but still currents of the delight of existence. The reason for this imperfection and this perversion is the self-division of the being in his consciousness by measuring and limiting Maya and in consequence an egoistic and piecemeal instead of a universal reception of contacts by the individual. For the universal soul all things and all contacts of things carry in them an essence of delight best described by the Sanskrit aesthetic term, *rasa*, which means at once sap or essence of a thing and its taste. It is because we do not seek the essence of the thing in its contact with us, but look only to the manner in which it affects our desires and fears, our cravings and shrinkings that grief and pain, imperfect and transient pleasure or indifference, that is to say, blank inability to seize the essence, are the forms taken by the Rasa. If we could be entirely disinterested in mind and heart and impose that detachment on the nervous being, the progressive elimination of these imperfect and perverse forms of Rasa would be possible and the true essential taste of the inalienable delight of existence in all its variations would be within our reach. We attain to something of this capacity for variable but universal delight in the aesthetic reception of things as represented by Art and Poetry, so that we enjoy there the Rasa or taste of the sorrowful, the terrible, even the horrible or repellent;[1] and the reason is because we are detached, disinterested, not thinking of ourselves or of self-defence (*jugupsā*), but only of the thing and its essence. Certainly, this aesthetic reception of contacts is not a precise image or reflection of the pure delight which is supramental and supra-aesthetic; for the latter would eliminate sorrow, terror, horror and disgust with their cause while the former admits them: but it represents partially and imperfectly one stage of the progressive delight of the universal Soul in things in its manifestation and it admits us in one part of our nature to that detachment from egoistic sensa-

[1] So termed in Sanskrit Rhetoric, the *karuṇa*, *bhayānaka* and *bibhatsa* Rasas.

tion and that universal attitude through which the one Soul sees harmony and beauty where we divided beings experience rather chaos and discord. The full liberation can come to us only by a similar liberation in all our parts, the universal aesthesis, the universal standpoint of knowledge, the universal detachment from all things and yet sympathy with all in our nervous and emotional being.

Since the nature of suffering is a failure of the conscious-force in us to meet the shocks of existence and a consequent shrinking and contraction and its root is an inequality of that receptive and possessing force due to our self-limitation by egoism consequent on the ignorance of our true Self, of Sachchidananda, the elimination of suffering must first proceed by the substitution of *titikṣā*, the facing, enduring and conquest of all shocks of existence for *jugupsā*, the shrinking and contraction: by this endurance and conquest we proceed to an equality which may be either an equal indifference to all contacts or an equal gladness in all contacts; and this equality again must find a firm foundation in the substitution of the Sachchidananda consciousness which is All-Bliss for the ego-consciousness which enjoys and suffers. The Sachchidananda consciousness may be transcendent of the universe and aloof from it, and to this state of distant Bliss the path is equal indifference; it is the path of the ascetic. Or the Sachchidananda consciousness may be at once transcendent and universal; and to this state of present and all-embracing Bliss the path is surrender and loss of the ego in the universal and possession of an all-pervading equal delight; it is the path of the ancient Vedic sages. But neutrality to the imperfect touches of pleasure and the perverse touches of pain is the first direct and natural result of the soul's self-discipline and the conversion to equal delight can, usually, come only afterwards. The direct transformation of the triple vibration into Ananda is possible, but less easy to the human being.

Such then is the view of the universe which arises out of the integral Vedantic affirmation. An infinite, indivisible existence all-blissful in its pure self-consciousness moves out of its fundamental purity into the varied play of Force that is consciousness, into the movement of Prakriti which is the play of Maya. The

delight of its existence is at first self-gathered, absorbed, subconscious in the basis of the physical universe; then emergent in a great mass of neutral movement which is not yet what we call sensation; then further emergent with the growth of mind and ego in the triple vibration of pain, pleasure and indifference originating from the limitation of the force of consciousness in the form and from its exposure to shocks of the universal Force which it finds alien to it and out of harmony with its own measure and standard; finally, the conscious emergence of the full Sachchidananda in its creations by universality, by equality, by self-possession and conquest of Nature. This is the course and movement of the world.

If it then be asked why the One Existence should take delight in such a movement, the answer lies in the fact that all possibilities are inherent in Its infinity and that the delight of existence — in its mutable becoming, not in its immutable being, — lies precisely in the variable realisation of its possibilities. And the possibility worked out here in the universe of which we are a part, begins from the concealment of Sachchidananda in that which seems to be its own opposite and its self-finding even amid the terms of that opposite. Infinite being loses itself in the appearance of non-being and emerges in the appearance of a finite Soul; infinite consciousness loses itself in the appearance of a vast indeterminate inconscience and emerges in the appearance of a superficial limited consciousness; infinite self-sustaining Force loses itself in the appearance of a chaos of atoms and emerges in the appearance of the insecure balance of a world; infinite Delight loses itself in the appearance of an insensible Matter and emerges in the appearance of a discordant rhythm of varied pain, pleasure and neutral feeling, love, hatred and indifference; infinite unity loses itself in the appearance of a chaos of multiplicity and emerges in a discord of forces and beings which seek to recover unity by possessing, dissolving and devouring each other. In this creation the real Sachchidananda has to emerge. Man, the individual, has to become and to live as a universal being; his limited mental consciousness has to widen to the superconscient unity in which each embraces all; his narrow heart has to learn the infinite embrace and replace its lusts and

discords by universal love and his restricted vital being to become equal to the whole shock of the universe upon it and capable of universal delight; his very physical being has to know itself as no separate entity but as one with and sustaining in itself the whole flow of the indivisible Force that is all things; his whole nature has to reproduce in the individual the unity, the harmony, the oneness-in-all of the supreme Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

Through all this play the secret reality is always one and the same delight of existence, — the same in the delight of the subconscious sleep before the emergence of the individual, in the delight of the struggle and all the varieties, vicissitudes, perversions, conversions, reversions of the effort to find itself amid the mazes of the half-conscious dream of which the individual is the centre, and in the delight of the eternal superconscient self-possession into which the individual must wake and there become one with the indivisible Sachchidananda. This is the play of the One, the Lord, the All as it reveals itself to our liberated and enlightened knowledge from the conceptive standpoint of this material universe.

CHAPTER XIII

The Divine Maya

> By the Names of the Lord and hers they shaped and measured the force of the Mother of Light; wearing might after might of that Force as a robe the lords of Maya shaped out Form in this Being.
>
> The Masters of Maya shaped all by His Maya; the Fathers who have divine vision set Him within as a child that is to be born.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[1]

EXISTENCE that acts and creates by the power and from the pure delight of its conscious being is the reality that we are, the self of all our modes and moods, the cause, object and goal of all our doing, becoming and creating. As the poet, artist or musician when he creates does really nothing but develop some potentiality in his unmanifested self into a form of manifestation and as the thinker, statesman, mechanist only bring out into a shape of things that which lay hidden in themselves, was themselves, is still themselves when it is cast into form, so is it with the world and the Eternal. All creation or becoming is nothing but this self-manifestation. Out of the seed there evolves that which is already in the seed, pre-existent in being, predestined in its will to become, prearranged in the delight of becoming. The original plasm held in itself in force of being the resultant organism. For it is always that secret, burdened, self-knowing force which labours under its own irresistible impulse to manifest the form of itself with which it is charged. Only, the individual who creates or develops out of himself, makes a distinction between himself, the force that works in him and the material in which he works. In reality the force is himself, the individualised consciousness which it instrumentalises is himself, the material which it uses is himself, the resultant form is himself. In other words it is one existence, one force, one delight of being which concentrates itself at various points, says of each "This is I" and works in it by a various play of self-force for a various play of self-formation.

[1] III. 38. 7; IX. 83. 3.

What it produces is itself and can be nothing other than itself; it is working out a play, a rhythm, a development of its own existence, force of consciousness and delight of being. Therefore whatever comes into the world, seeks nothing but this, to be, to arrive at the intended form, to enlarge its self-existence in that form, to develop, manifest, increase, realise infinitely the consciousness and the power that is in it, to have the delight of coming into manifestation, the delight of the form of being, the delight of the rhythm of consciousness, the delight of the play of force and to aggrandise and perfect that delight by whatever means is possible, in whatever direction, through whatever idea of itself may be suggested to it by the Existence, the Conscious-Force, the Delight active within its deepest being.

And if there is any goal, any completeness towards which things tend, it can only be the completeness, — in the individual and in the whole which the individuals constitute, — of its self-existence, of its power and consciousness and of its delight of being. But such completeness is not possible in the individual consciousness concentrated within the limits of the individual formation; absolute completeness is not feasible in the finite because it is alien to the self-conception of the finite. Therefore the only final goal possible is the emergence of the infinite consciousness in the individual; it is his recovery of the truth of himself by self-knowledge and by self-realisation, the truth of the Infinite in being, the Infinite in consciousness, the Infinite in delight repossessed as his own Self and Reality of which the finite is only a mask and an instrument for various expression.

Thus by the very nature of the world-play as it has been realised by Sachchidananda in the vastness of His existence extended as Space and Time, we have to conceive first of an involution and a self-absorption of conscious being into the density and infinite divisibility of substance, for otherwise there can be no finite variation; next, an emergence of the self-imprisoned force into formal being, living being, thinking being; and finally a release of the formed thinking being into the free realisation of itself as the One and the Infinite at play in the world and by the release its recovery of the boundless existence-consciousness-bliss that even now it is secretly, really and eternally. This triple

movement is the whole key of the world-enigma.

It is so that the ancient and eternal truth of Vedanta receives into itself and illumines, justifies and shows us all the meaning of the modern and phenomenal truth of evolution in the universe. And it is so only that this modern truth of evolution which is the old truth of the Universal developing itself successively in Time, seen opaquely through the study of Force and Matter, can find its own full sense and justification, — by illuminating itself with the Light of the ancient and eternal truth still preserved for us in the Vedantic Scriptures. To this mutual self-discovery and self-illumination by the fusion of the old Eastern and the new Western knowledge the thought of the world is already turning.

Still, when we have found that all things are Sachchid-ananda, all has not yet been explained. We know the Reality of the universe, we do not yet know the process by which that Reality has turned itself into this phenomenon. We have the key of the riddle, we have still to find the lock in which it will turn. For this Existence, Conscious-Force, Delight does not work directly or with a sovereign irresponsibility like a magician building up worlds and universes by the mere fiat of its word. We perceive a process, we are aware of a Law.

It is true that this Law when we analyse it, seems to resolve itself into an equilibrium of the play of forces and a determination of that play into fixed lines of working by the accident of development and the habit of past realised energy. But this apparent and secondary truth is final to us only so long as we conceive of Force solely. When we perceive that Force is a self-expression of Existence, we are bound to perceive also that this line which Force has taken, corresponds to some self-truth of that Existence which governs and determines its constant curve and destination. And since consciousness is the nature of the original Existence and the essence of its Force, this truth must be a self-perception in Conscious-Being and this determination of the line taken by Force must result from a power of self-directive knowledge inherent in Consciousness which enables it to guide its own Force inevitably along the logical line of the original self-perception. It is then a self-determining power in universal consciousness, a capacity in self-awareness of infinite existence to

perceive a certain Truth in itself and direct its force of creation along the line of that Truth, which has presided over the cosmic manifestation.

But why should we interpose any special power or faculty between the infinite Consciousness itself and the result of its workings? May not this Self-awareness of the Infinite range freely creating forms which afterwards remain in play so long as there is not the fiat that bids them cease, — even as the old Semitic Revelation tells us, "God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light"? But when we say, "God said, Let there be Light", we assume the act of a power of consciousness which determines light out of everything else that is not light; and when we say "and there was Light" we presume a directing faculty, an active power corresponding to the original perceptive power, which brings out the phenomenon and, working out Light according to the line of the original perception, prevents it from being overpowered by all the infinite possibilities that are other than itself. Infinite consciousness in its infinite action can produce only infinite results; to settle upon a fixed Truth or order of truths and build a world in conformity with that which is fixed, demands a selective faculty of knowledge commissioned to shape finite appearance out of the infinite Reality.

This power was known to the Vedic seers by the name of Maya. Maya meant for them the power of infinite consciousness to comprehend, contain in itself and measure out, that is to say, to form — for form is delimitation — Name and Shape out of the vast illimitable Truth of infinite existence. It is by Maya that static truth of essential being becomes ordered truth of active being, — or, to put it in more metaphysical language, out of the supreme being in which all is all without barrier of separative consciousness emerges the phenomenal being in which all is in each and each is in all for the play of existence with existence, consciousness with consciousness, force with force, delight with delight. This play of all in each and each in all is concealed at first from us by the mental play or the illusion of Maya which persuades each that he is in all but not all in him and that he is in all as a separated being not as a being always inseparably one with the rest of existence. Afterwards we have to emerge from this

error into the supramental play or the truth of Maya where the "each" and the "all" coexist in the inseparable unity of the one truth and the multiple symbol. The lower, present and deluding mental Maya has first to be embraced, then to be overcome; for it is God's play with division and darkness and limitation, desire and strife and suffering in which He subjects Himself to the Force that has come out of Himself and by her obscure suffers Himself to be obscured. That other Maya concealed by this mental has to be overpassed, then embraced; for it is God's play of the infinities of existence, the splendours of knowledge, the glories of force mastered and the ecstasies of love illimitable where He emerges out of the hold of Force, holds her instead and fulfils in her illumined that for which she went out from Him at the first.

This distinction between the lower and the higher Maya is the link in thought and in cosmic Fact which the pessimistic and illusionist philosophies miss or neglect. To them the mental Maya, or perhaps an Overmind, is the creatrix of the world, and a world created by mental Maya would indeed be an inexplicable paradox and a fixed yet floating nightmare of conscious existence which could neither be classed as an illusion nor as a reality. We have to see that the mind is only an intermediate term between the creative governing knowledge and the soul imprisoned in its works. Sachchidananda, involved by one of His lower movements in the self-oblivious absorption of Force that is lost in the form of her own workings, returns towards Himself out of the self-oblivion; Mind is only one of His instruments in the descent and the ascent. It is an instrument of the descending creation, not the secret creatrix, — a transitional stage in the ascent, not our high original source and the consummate term of cosmic existence.

The philosophies which recognise Mind alone as the creator of the worlds or accept an original principle with Mind as the only mediator between it and the forms of the universe, may be divided into the purely noumenal and the idealistic. The purely noumenal recognise in the cosmos only the work of Mind, Thought, Idea: but Idea may be purely arbitrary and have no essential relation to any real Truth of existence; or such Truth,

if it exists, may be regarded as a mere Absolute aloof from all relations and irreconcilable with a world of relations. The idealistic interpretation supposes a relation between the Truth behind and the conceptive phenomenon in front, a relation which is not merely that of an antinomy and opposition. The view I am presenting goes farther in idealism; it sees the creative Idea as Real-Idea, that is to say, a power of Conscious-Force expressive of real being, born out of real being and partaking of its nature and neither a child of the Void nor a weaver of fictions. It is conscious Reality throwing itself into mutable forms of its own imperishable and immutable substance. The world is therefore not a figment of conception in the universal Mind, but a conscious birth of that which is beyond Mind into forms of itself. A Truth of conscious being supports these forms and expresses itself in them, and the knowledge corresponding to the truth thus expressed reigns as a supramental Truth-Consciousness[1] organising real ideas in a perfect harmony before they are cast into the mental-vital-material mould. Mind, Life and Body are an inferior consciousness and a partial expression which strives to arrive in the mould of a various evolution at that superior expression of itself already existent to the Beyond-Mind. That which is in the Beyond-Mind is the ideal which in its own conditions it is labouring to realise.

From our ascending point of view we may say that the Real is behind all that exists; it expresses itself intermediately in an Ideal which is a harmonised truth of itself; the Ideal throws out a phenomenal reality of variable conscious-being which, inevitably drawn towards its own essential Reality, tries at last to recover it entirely whether by a violent leap or normally through the Ideal which put it forth. It is this that explains the imperfect reality of human existence as seen by the Mind, the instinctive aspiration in the mental being towards a perfectibility ever beyond itself, towards the concealed harmony of the Ideal, and the supreme surge of the spirit beyond the ideal to the transcendental. The very facts of our consciousness, its constitution and

[1] I take the phrase from the Rig Veda, — *ṛta-cit*, which means the consciousness of essential truth of being (*satyam*), of ordered truth of active being (*ṛtam*) and the vast self-awareness (*bṛhat*) in which alone this consciousness is possible.

its necessity presuppose such a triple order; they negate the dual and irreconcilable antithesis of a mere Absolute to a mere relativity.

Mind is not sufficient to explain existence in the universe. Infinite Consciousness must first translate itself into infinite faculty of Knowledge or, as we call it from our point of view, omniscience. But Mind is not a faculty of knowledge nor an instrument of omniscience; it is a faculty for the seeking of knowledge, for expressing as much as it can gain of it in certain forms of a relative thought and for using it towards certain capacities of action. Even when it finds, it does not possess; it only keeps a certain fund of current coin of Truth — not Truth itself — in the bank of Memory to draw upon according to its needs. For Mind is that which does not know, which tries to know and which never knows except as in a glass darkly. It is the power which interprets truth of universal existence for the practical uses of a certain order of things; it is not the power which knows and guides that existence and therefore it cannot be the power which created or manifested it.

But if we suppose an infinite Mind which would be free from our limitations, that at least might well be the creator of the universe? But such a Mind would be something quite different from the definition of mind as we know it: it would be something beyond mentality; it would be the supramental Truth. An infinite Mind constituted in the terms of mentality as we know it could only create an infinite chaos, a vast clash of chance, accident, vicissitude wandering towards an indeterminate end after which it would be always tentatively groping and aspiring. An infinite, omniscient, omnipotent Mind would not be mind at all, but supramental knowledge.

Mind, as we know it, is a reflective mirror which receives presentations or images of a pre-existent Truth or Fact, either external to or at least vaster than itself. It represents to itself from moment to moment the phenomenon that is or has been. It possesses also the faculty of constructing in itself possible images other than those of the actual fact presented to it; that is to say, it represents to itself not only phenomenon that has been but also phenomenon that may be: it cannot, be it noted,

represent to itself phenomenon that assuredly will be, except when it is an assured repetition of what is or has been. It has, finally, the faculty of forecasting new modifications which it seeks to construct out of the meeting of what has been and what may be, out of the fulfilled possibility and the unfulfilled, something that it sometimes succeeds in constructing more or less exactly, sometimes fails to realise, but usually finds cast into other forms than it forecasted and turned to other ends than it desired or intended.

An infinite Mind of this character might possibly construct an accidental cosmos of conflicting possibilities and it might shape it into something shifting, something always transient, something ever uncertain in its drift, neither real nor unreal, possessed of no definite end or aim but only an endless succession of momentary aims leading, — since there is no superior directing power of knowledge, — eventually nowhither. Nihilism or Illusionism or some kindred philosophy is the only logical conclusion of such a pure noumenalism. The cosmos so constructed would be a presentation or reflection of something not itself, but always and to the end a false presentation, a distorted reflection; all cosmic existence would be a Mind struggling to work out fully its imaginations, but not succeeding, because they have no imperative basis of self-truth; overpowered and carried forward by the stream of its own past energies, it would be borne onward indeterminately for ever without issue unless or until it can either slay itself or fall into an eternal stillness. That traced to its roots is Nihilism and Illusionism and it is the only wisdom if we suppose that our human mentality or anything at all like it represents the highest cosmic force and the original conception at work in the universe.

But the moment we find in the original power of knowledge a higher force than that which is represented by our human mentality, this conception of the universe becomes insufficient and therefore invalid. It has its truth but it is not the whole truth. It is law of the immediate appearance of the universe, but not of its original truth and ultimate fact. For we perceive behind the action of Mind, Life and Body, something that is not embraced in the stream of Force but embraces and controls

it; something that is not born into a world which it seeks to interpret, but has created in its being a world of which it has the omniscience; something that does not labour perpetually to form something else out of itself while it drifts in the overmastering surge of past energies it can no longer control, but has already in its consciousness a perfect Form of itself and is here gradually unfolding it. The world expresses a foreseen Truth, obeys a predetermining Will, realises an original formative self-vision, — it is the growing image of a divine creation.

So long as we work only through the mentality governed by appearances, this something beyond and behind and yet always immanent can be only an inference or a presence vaguely felt. We perceive a law of cyclic progress and infer an ever-increasing perfection of somewhat that is somewhere foreknown. For everywhere we see Law founded in self-being and, when we penetrate within into the rationale of its process, we find that Law is the expression of an innate knowledge, a knowledge inherent in the existence which is expressing itself and implied in the force that expresses it; and Law developed by Knowledge so as to allow of progression implies a divinely seen goal towards which the motion is directed. We see too that our reason seeks to emerge out of and dominate the helpless drift of our mentality and we arrive at the perception that Reason is only a messenger, a representative or a shadow of a greater consciousness beyond itself which does not need to reason because it is all and knows all that it is. And we can then pass to the inference that this source of Reason is identical with the Knowledge that acts as Law in the world. This Knowledge determines its own law sovereignly because it knows what has been, is and will be and it knows because it is eternally, and infinitely cognises itself. Being that is infinite consciousness, infinite consciousness that is omnipotent force, when it makes a world, — that is to say, a harmony of itself, — its object of consciousness, becomes seizable by our thought as a cosmic existence that knows its own truth and realises in forms that which it knows.

But it is only when we cease to reason and go deep into ourselves, into that secrecy where the activity of mind is stilled, that this other consciousness becomes really manifest to us — how-

ever imperfectly owing to our long habit of mental reaction and mental limitation. Then we can know surely in an increasing illumination that which we had uncertainly conceived by the pale and flickering light of Reason. Knowledge waits seated beyond mind and intellectual reasoning, throned in the luminous vast of illimitable self-vision.

CHAPTER XIV

The Supermind as Creator

All things are self-deployings of the Divine Knowledge.
Vishnu Purana.[1]

A PRINCIPLE of active Will and Knowledge superior to Mind and creatrix of the worlds is then the intermediary power and state of being between that self-possession of the One and this flux of the Many. This principle is not entirely alien to us; it does not belong solely and incommunicably to a Being who is entirely other than ourselves or to a state of existence from which we are mysteriously projected into birth, but also rejected and unable to return. If it seems to us to be seated on heights far above us, yet are they the heights of our own being and accessible to our tread. We can not only infer and glimpse that Truth, but we are capable of realising it. We may by a progressive expanding or a sudden luminous self-transcendence mount up to these summits in unforgettable moments or dwell on them during hours or days of greatest superhuman experience. When we descend again, there are doors of communication which we can keep always open or reopen even though they should constantly shut. But to dwell there permanently on this last and highest summit of the created and creative being is in the end the supreme ideal for our evolving human consciousness when it seeks not self-annulment but self-perfection. For, as we have seen, this is the original Idea and the final harmony and truth to which our gradual self-expression in the world returns and which it is meant to achieve.

Still, we may doubt whether it is possible, now or at all, to give any account of this state to the human intellect or to utilise in any communicable and organisable way its divine workings for the elevation of our human knowledge and action. The doubt does not arise solely from the rarity or dubiety of any known phenomena that would betray a human working of this divine faculty, or from the remoteness which separates this action

[1] II. 12. 39.

from the experience and verifiable knowledge of ordinary humanity; it is strongly suggested also by the apparent contradiction in both essence and operation between human mentality and the divine Supermind.

And certainly, if this consciousness had no relation at all to mind nor anywhere any identity with the mental being, it would be quite impossible to give any account of it to our human notions. Or, if it were in its nature only vision in knowledge and not at all dynamic power of knowledge, we could hope to attain by its contact a beatific state of mental illumination, but not a greater light and power for the works of the world. But since this consciousness is creatrix of the world, it must be not only state of knowledge, but power of knowledge, and not only a Will to light and vision, but a Will to power and works. And since Mind too is created out of it, Mind must be a development by limitation out of this primal faculty and this mediatory act of the supreme Consciousness and must therefore be capable of resolving itself back into it through a reverse development by expansion. For always Mind must be identical with Supermind in essence and conceal in itself the potentiality of Supermind, however different or even contrary it may have become in its actual forms and settled modes of operation. It may not then be an irrational or unprofitable attempt to strive by the method of comparison and contrast towards some idea of the Supermind from the standpoint and in the terms of our intellectual knowledge. The idea, the terms may well be inadequate and yet still serve as a finger of light pointing us onward on a way which to some distance at least we may tread. Moreover it is possible for Mind to rise beyond itself into certain heights or planes of consciousness which receive into themselves some modified light or power of the supramental consciousness and know that by an illumination, intuition or a direct contact or experience, although to live in it and see and act from it is a victory that has not yet been made humanly possible.

And first we may pause a moment and ask ourselves whether no light can be found from the past which will guide us towards these ill-explored domains. We need a name, and we need a starting-point. For we have called this state of consciousness the

Supermind; but the word is ambiguous since it may be taken in the sense of mind itself super-eminent and lifted above ordinary mentality but not radically changed, or on the contrary it may bear the sense of all that is beyond mind and therefore assume a too extensive comprehensiveness which would bring in even the Ineffable itself. A subsidiary description is required which will more accurately limit its significance.

It is the cryptic verses of the Veda that help us here; for they contain, though concealed, the gospel of the divine and immortal Supermind and through the veil some illumining flashes come to us. We can see through these utterances the conception of this Supermind as a vastness beyond the ordinary firmaments of our consciousness in which truth of being is luminously one with all that expresses it and assures inevitably truth of vision, formulation, arrangement, word, act and movement and therefore truth also of result of movement, result of action and expression, infallible ordinance or law. Vast all-comprehensiveness; luminous truth and harmony of being in that vastness and not a vague chaos or self-lost obscurity; truth of law and act and knowledge expressive of that harmonious truth of being: these seem to be the essential terms of the Vedic description. The Gods, who in their highest secret entity are powers of this Supermind, born of it, seated in it as in their proper home, are in their knowledge "truth-conscious" and in their action possessed of the "seer-will". Their conscious-force turned towards works and creation is possessed and guided by a perfect and direct knowledge of the thing to be done and its essence and its law, — a knowledge which determines a wholly effective will-power that does not deviate or falter in its process or in its result, but expresses and fulfils spontaneously and inevitably in the act that which has been seen in the vision. Light is here one with Force, the vibrations of knowledge with the rhythm of the will and both are one, perfectly and without seeking, groping or effort, with the assured result. The divine Nature has a double power, a spontaneous self-formulation and self-arrangement which wells naturally out of the essence of the thing manifested and expresses its original truth, and a self-force of light inherent in the thing itself and the source of its spontaneous and inevitable self-arrangement.

There are subordinate, but important details. The Vedic seers seem to speak of two primary faculties of the "truth-conscious" soul; they are Sight and Hearing, by which is intended direct operations of an inherent Knowledge describable as truth-vision and truth-audition and reflected from far-off in our human mentality by the faculties of revelation and inspiration. Besides, a distinction seems to be made in the operations of the Supermind between knowledge by a comprehending and pervading consciousness which is very near to subjective knowledge by identity and knowledge by a projecting, confronting, apprehending consciousness which is the beginning of objective cognition. These are the Vedic clues. And we may accept from this ancient experience the subsidiary term "truth-consciousness" to delimit the connotation of the more elastic phrase, Supermind.

We see at once that such a consciousness, described by such characteristics, must be an intermediate formulation which refers back to a term above it and forward to another below it; we see at the same time that it is evidently the link and means by which the inferior develops out of the superior and should equally be the link and means by which it may develop back again towards its source. The term above is the unitarian or indivisible consciousness of pure Sachchidananda in which there are no separating distinctions; the term below is the analytic or dividing consciousness of Mind which can only know by separation and distinction and has at the most a vague and secondary apprehension of unity and infinity, — for, though it can synthetise its divisions, it cannot arrive at a true totality. Between them is this comprehensive and creative consciousness, by its power of pervading and comprehending knowledge the child of that self-awareness by identity which is the poise of the Brahman and by its power of projecting, confronting, apprehending knowledge parent of that awareness by distinction which is the process of the Mind.

Above, the formula of the One eternally stable and immutable; below, the formula of the Many which, eternally mutable, seeks but hardly finds in the flux of things a firm and immutable standing-point; between, the seat of all trinities, of all that is biune, of all that becomes Many-in-One and yet remains One-in-

Many because it was originally One that is always potentially Many. This intermediary term is therefore the beginning and end of all creation and arrangement, the Alpha and the Omega, the starting-point of all differentiation, the instrument of all unification, originative, executive and consummative of all realised or realisable harmonies. It has the knowledge of the One, but is able to draw out of the One its hidden multitudes; it manifests the Many, but does not lose itself in their differentiations. And shall we not say that its very existence points back to Something beyond our supreme perception of the ineffable Unity, — Something ineffable and mentally inconceivable not because of its unity and indivisibility, but because of its freedom from even these formulations of our mind, — Something beyond both unity and multiplicity? That would be the utter Absolute and Real which yet justifies to us both our knowledge of God and our knowledge of the world.

But these terms are large and difficult to grasp; let us come to precisions. We speak of the One as Sachchidananda; but in the very description we posit three entities and unite them to arrive at a trinity. We say "Existence, Consciousness, Bliss", and then we say, "they are one." It is a process of the mind. But for the unitarian consciousness such a process is inadmissible. Existence is Consciousness and there can be no distinction between them; Consciousness is Bliss and there can be no distinction between them. And since there is not even this differentiation, there can be no world. If that is the sole reality, then world is not and never existed, can never have been conceived; for indivisible consciousness is undividing consciousness and cannot originate division and differentiation. But this is a *reductio ad absurdum*; we cannot admit it unless we are content to base everything upon an impossible paradox and an unreconciled antithesis.

On the other hand, Mind can conceive with precision divisions as real; it can conceive a synthetic totality or the finite extending itself indefinitely; it can grasp aggregates of divided things and the samenesses underlying them; but the ultimate unity and absolute infinity are to its conscience of things abstract notions and unseizable quantities, not something that is real

to its grasp, much less something that is alone real. Here is therefore the very opposite term to the unitarian consciousness; we have, confronting the essential and indivisible unity, an essential multiplicity which cannot arrive at unity without abolishing itself and in the very act confessing that it could never really have existed. Yet it was; for it is this that has found unity and abolished itself. And again we have a *reductio ad absurdum* repeating the violent paradox which seeks to convince thought by stunning it and the irreconciled and irreconcilable antithesis.

The difficulty, in its lower term, disappears if we realise that Mind is only a preparatory form of our consciousness. Mind is an instrument of analysis and synthesis, but not of essential knowledge. Its function is to cut out something vaguely from the unknown Thing in itself and call this measurement or delimitation of it the whole, and again to analyse the whole into its parts which it regards as separate mental objects. It is only the parts and accidents that the Mind can see definitely and, after its own fashion, know. Of the whole its only definite idea is an assemblage of parts or a totality of properties and accidents. The whole not seen as a part of something else or in its own parts, properties and accidents is to the mind no more than a vague perception; only when it is analysed and put by itself as a separate constituted object, a totality in a larger totality, can Mind say to itself, "This now I know." And really it does not know. It knows only its own analysis of the object and the idea it has formed of it by a synthesis of the separate parts and properties that it has seen. There its characteristic power, its sure function ceases, and if we would have a greater, a profounder and a real knowledge, — a knowledge and not an intense but formless sentiment such as comes sometimes to certain deep but inarticulate parts of our mentality, — Mind has to make room for another consciousness which will fulfil Mind by transcending it or reverse and so rectify its operations after leaping beyond it: the summit of mental knowledge is only a vaulting-board from which that leap can be taken. The utmost mission of Mind is to train our obscure consciousness which has emerged out of the dark prison of Matter, to enlighten its blind instincts, random intuitions, vague perceptions till it shall become capable of this greater light and

this higher ascension. Mind is a passage, not a culmination.

On the other hand, the unitarian consciousness or indivisible Unity cannot be that impossible entity, a thing without contents out of which all contents have issued and into which they disappear and become annihilated. It must be an original self-concentration in which all is contained but in another manner than in this temporal and spatial manifestation. That which has thus concentrated itself, is the utterly ineffable and inconceivable Existence which the Nihilist images to his mind as the negative Void of all that we know and are but the Transcendentalist with equal reason may image to his mind as the positive but indistinguishable Reality of all that we know and are. "In the beginning," says the Vedanta, "was the one Existence without a second", but before and after the beginning, now, for ever and beyond Time is that which we cannot describe even as the One, even when we say that nothing but That is. What we can be aware of is, first, its original self-concentration which we endeavour to realise as the indivisible One; secondly, the diffusion and apparent disintegration of all that was concentrated in its unity which is the Mind's conception of the universe; and thirdly, its firm self-extension in the Truth-Consciousness which contains and upholds the diffusion and prevents it from being a real disintegration, maintains unity in utmost diversity and stability in utmost mutability, insists on harmony in the appearance of an all-pervading strife and collision, keeps eternal cosmos where Mind would arrive only at a chaos eternally attempting to form itself. This is the Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness, the Real-Idea which knows itself and all that it becomes.

Supermind is the vast self-extension of the Brahman that contains and develops. By the Idea it develops the triune principle of existence, consciousness and bliss out of their indivisible unity. It differentiates them, but it does not divide. It establishes a Trinity, not arriving like the Mind from the three to the One, but manifesting the three out of the One, — for it manifests and develops,—and yet maintaining them in the unity, — for it knows and contains. By the differentiation it is able to bring forward one or other of them as the effective Deity which contains the others involved or explicit in itself and this process it makes the

foundation of all other differentiations. And it acts by the same operation on all the principles and possibilities which it evolves out of this all-constituent trinity. It possesses the power of development, of evolution, of making explicit, and that power carries with it the other power of involution, of envelopment, of making implicit. In a sense, the whole of creation may be said to be a movement between two involutions, Spirit in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward to the other pole of Matter, Matter in which also all is involved and out of which all evolves upwards to the other pole of Spirit.

Thus the whole process of differentiation by the Real-Idea creative of the universe is a putting forward of principles, forces, forms which contain for the comprehending consciousness all the rest of existence within them and front the apprehending consciousness with all the rest of existence implicit behind them. Therefore all is in each as well as each in all. Therefore every seed of things implies in itself all the infinity of various possibilities, but is kept to one law of process and result by the Will, that is to say, by the Knowledge-Force of the Conscious-Being who is manifesting himself and who, sure of the Idea in himself, predetermines by it his own forms and movements. The seed is the Truth of its own being which this Self-Existence sees in itself, the resultant of that seed of self-vision is the Truth of self-action, the natural law of development, formation and functioning which follows inevitably upon the self-vision and keeps to the processes involved in the original Truth. All Nature is simply, then, the Seer-Will, the Knowledge-Force of the Conscious-Being at work to evolve in force and form all the inevitable truth of the Idea into which it has originally thrown itself.

This conception of the Idea points us to the essential contrast between our mental consciousness and the Truth-Consciousness. We regard thought as a thing separate from existence, abstract, unsubstantial, different from reality, something which appears one knows not whence and detaches itself from objective reality in order to observe, understand and judge it; for so it seems and therefore is to our all-dividing, all-analysing mentality. The first business of Mind is to render "discrete", to make fissures much more than to discern, and so it has made this para-

lysing fissure between thought and reality. But in Supermind all being is consciousness, all consciousness is of being, and the idea, a pregnant vibration of consciousness, is equally a vibration of being pregnant of itself; it is an initial coming out, in creative self-knowledge, of that which lay concentrated in uncreative self-awareness. It comes out as Idea that is a reality, and it is that reality of the Idea which evolves itself, always by its own power and consciousness of itself, always self-conscious, always self-developing by the will inherent in the Idea, always self-realising by the knowledge ingrained in its every impulsion. This is the truth of all creation, of all evolution.

In Supermind being, consciousness of knowledge and consciousness of will are not divided as they seem to be in our mental operations; they are a trinity, one movement with three effective aspects. Each has its own effect. Being gives the effect of substance, consciousness the effect of knowledge, of the self-guiding and shaping idea, of comprehension and apprehension; will gives the effect of self-fulfilling force. But the idea is only the light of the reality illumining itself; it is not mental thought nor imagination, but effective self-awareness. It is Real-Idea.

In Supermind knowledge in the Idea is not divorced from will in the Idea, but one with it — just as it is not different from being or substance, but is one with the being, luminous power of the substance. As the power of burning light is not different from the substance of the fire, so the power of the Idea is not different from the substance of the Being which works itself out in the Idea and its development. In our mentality all are different. We have an idea and a will according to the idea or an impulsion of will and an idea detaching itself from it; but we differentiate effectually the idea from the will and both from ourselves. I am; the idea is a mysterious abstraction that appears in me, the will is another mystery, a force nearer to concreteness, though not concrete, but always something that is not myself, something that I have or get or am seized with, but am not. I make a gulf also between my will, its means and the effect, for these I regard as concrete realities outside and other than myself. Therefore neither myself nor the idea nor the will in me are self-effective. The idea may fall away from me, the will may fail, the means

may be lacking, I myself by any or all of these lacunae may remain unfulfilled.

But in the Supermind there is no such paralysing division, because knowledge is not self-divided, force is not self-divided, being is not self-divided as in the mind; they are neither broken in themselves, nor divorced from each other. For the Supermind is the Vast; it starts from unity, not division, it is primarily comprehensive, differentiation is only its secondary act. Therefore whatever be the truth of being expressed, the idea corresponds to it exactly, the will-force to the idea, — force being only power of the consciousness, — and the result to the will. Nor does the idea clash with other ideas, the will or force with other will or force as in man and his world; for there is one vast Consciousness which contains and relates all ideas in itself as its own ideas, one vast Will which contains and relates all energies in itself as its own energies. It holds back this, advances that other, but according to its own preconceiving Idea-Will.

This is the justification of the current religious notions of the omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of the Divine Being. Far from being an irrational imagination they are perfectly rational and in no way contradict either the logic of a comprehensive philosophy or the indications of observation and experience. The error is to make an unbridgeable gulf between God and man, Brahman and the world. That error elevates an actual and practical differentiation in being, consciousness and force into an essential division. But this aspect of the question we shall touch upon afterwards. At present we have arrived at an affirmation and some conception of the divine and creative Supermind in which all is one in being, consciousness, will and delight, yet with an infinite capacity of differentiation that deploys but does not destroy the unity, — in which Truth is the substance and Truth rises in the Idea and Truth comes out in the form and there is one truth of knowledge and will, one truth of self-fulfilment and therefore of delight; for all self-fulfilment is satisfaction of being. Therefore, always, in all mutations and combinations a self-existent and inalienable harmony.

CHAPTER XV

The Supreme Truth-Consciousness

> One seated in the sleep of Superconscience, a massed Intelligence, blissful and the enjoyer of Bliss....This is the omnipotent, this is the omniscient, this is the inner control, this is the source of all.
>
> *Mandukya Upanishad.*[1]

WE HAVE to regard therefore this all-containing, all-originating, all-consummating Supermind as the nature of the Divine Being, not indeed in its absolute self-existence, but in its action as the Lord and Creator of its own worlds. This is the truth of that which we call God. Obviously this is not the too personal and limited Deity, the magnified and supernatural Man of the ordinary occidental conception; for that conception erects a too human Eidolon of a certain relation between the creative Supermind and the ego. We must not indeed exclude the personal aspect of the Deity, for the impersonal is only one face of existence; the Divine is All-existence, but it is also the one Existent, — it is the sole Conscious-Being, but still a Being. Nevertheless, with this aspect we are not concerned at present; it is the impersonal psychological truth of the divine Consciousness that we are seeking to fathom: it is this that we have to fix in a large and clarified conception.

The Truth-Consciousness is everywhere present in the universe as an ordering self-knowledge by which the One manifests the harmonies of its infinite potential multiplicity. Without this ordering self-knowledge the manifestation would be merely a shifting chaos, precisely because the potentiality is infinite which by itself might lead only to a play of uncontrolled unbounded Chance. If there were only infinite potentiality without any law of guiding truth and harmonious self-vision, without any predetermining Idea in the very seed of things cast out for evolution, the world could be nothing but a teeming, amorphous, confused uncertainty. But the knowledge that creates, because what it creates or releases are forms and powers of itself and not

[1] Verses 5, 6.

things other than itself, possesses in its own being the vision of the truth and law that governs each potentiality, and along with that an intrinsic awareness of its relation to other potentialities and the harmonies that are possible between them; it holds all this prefigured in the general determining harmony which the whole rhythmic Idea of a universe must contain in its very birth and self-conception and which must therefore inevitably work out by the interplay of its constituents. It is the source and keeper of Law in the world; for that law is nothing arbitrary — it is the expression of a self-nature which is determined by the compelling truth of the real idea that each thing is in its inception. Therefore from the beginning the whole development is predetermined in its self-knowledge and at every moment in its self-working: it is what it must be at each moment by its own original inherent Truth; it moves to what it must be at the next, still by its own original inherent Truth; it will be at the end that which was contained and intended in its seed.

This development and progress of the world according to an original truth of its own being implies a succession of Time, a relation in Space and a regulated interaction of related things in Space to which the succession of Time gives the aspect of Causality. Time and Space, according to the metaphysician, have only a conceptual and not a real existence; but since all things and not these only are forms assumed by Conscious-Being in its own consciousness, the distinction is of no great importance. Time and Space are that one Conscious-Being viewing itself in extension, subjectively as Time, objectively as Space. Our mental view of these two categories is determined by the idea of measure which is inherent in the action of the analytical dividing movement of Mind. Time is for the Mind a mobile extension measured out by the succession of the past, present and future in which Mind places itself at a certain standpoint whence it looks before and after. Space is a stable extension measured out by divisibility of substance; at a certain point in that divisible extension Mind places itself and regards the disposition of substance around it.

In actual fact Mind measures Time by event and Space by Matter; but it is possible in pure mentality to disregard the

movement of event and the disposition of substance and realise the pure movement of Conscious-Force which constitutes Space and Time; these two are then merely two aspects of the universal force of Consciousness which in their intertwined interaction comprehend the warp and woof of its action upon itself. And to a consciousness higher than Mind which should regard our past, present and future in one view, containing and not contained in them, not situated at a particular moment of Time for its point of prospection, Time might well offer itself as an eternal present. And to the same consciousness not situated at any particular point of Space, but containing all points and regions in itself, Space also might well offer itself as a subjective and indivisible extension, — no less subjective than Time. At certain moments we become aware of such an indivisible regard upholding by its immutable self-conscious unity the variations of the universe. But we must not now ask how the contents of Time and Space would present themselves there in their transcendent truth; for this our mind cannot conceive, — and it is even ready to deny to this Indivisible any possibility of knowing the world in any other way than that of our mind and senses.

What we have to realise and can to a certain extent conceive is the one view and all-comprehending regard by which the Supermind embraces and unifies the successions of Time and the divisions of Space. And first, if there were not this factor of the successions of Time, there would be no change or progression; a perfect harmony would be perpetually manifest, coeval with other harmonies in a sort of eternal moment, not successive to them in the movement from past to future. We have instead the constant succession of a developing harmony in which one strain rises out of another that preceded it and conceals in itself that which it has replaced. Or, if the self-manifestation were to exist without the factor of divisible Space, there would be no mutable relation of forms or intershock of forces; all would exist and not be worked out, — a spaceless self-consciousness purely subjective would contain all things in an infinite subjective grasp as in the mind of a cosmic poet or dreamer, but would not distribute itself through all in an indefinite objective self-extension. Or again, if Time alone were real, its successions

would be a pure development in which one strain would rise out of another in a subjective free spontaneity as in a series of musical sounds or a succession of poetical images. We have instead a harmony worked out by Time in terms of forms and forces that stand related to one another in an all-containing spatial extension; an incessant succession of powers and figures of things and happenings in our vision of existence.

Different potentialities are embodied, placed, related in this field of Time and Space, each with its powers and possibilities fronting other powers and possibilities, and as a result the successions of Time become in their appearance to the mind a working out of things by shock and struggle and not a spontaneous succession. In reality, there is a spontaneous working out of things from within and the external shock and struggle are only the superficial aspect of this elaboration. For the inner and inherent law of the one and whole, which is necessarily a harmony, governs the outer and processive laws of the parts or forms which appear to be in collision; and to the supramental vision this greater and profounder truth of harmony is always present. That which is an apparent discord to the mind because it considers each thing separately in itself, is an element of the general ever-present and ever-developing harmony to the Supermind because it views all things in a multiple unity. Besides, the mind sees only a given time and space and views many possibilities pell-mell as all more or less realisable in that time and space; the divine Supermind sees the whole extension of Time and Space and can embrace all the mind's possibilities and very many more not visible to the mind, but without any error, groping or confusion; for it perceives each potentiality in its proper force, essential necessity, right relation to the others and the time, place and circumstance both of its gradual and its ultimate realisation. To see things steadily and see them whole is not possible to the mind; but it is the very nature of the transcendent Supermind.

This Supermind in its conscious vision not only contains all the forms of itself which its conscious force creates, but it pervades them as an indwelling Presence and a self-revealing Light. It is present, even though concealed, in every form and force of

the universe; it is that which determines sovereignly and spontaneously form, force and functioning; it limits the variations it compels; it gathers, disperses, modifies the energy which it uses; and all this is done in accord with the first laws[1] that its self-knowledge has fixed in the very birth of the form, at the very starting-point of the force. It is seated within everything as the Lord in the heart of all existences, — he who turns them as on an engine by the power of his Maya;[2] it is within them and embraces them as the divine Seer who variously disposed and ordained objects, each rightly according to the thing that it is, from years sempiternal.[3]

Each thing in Nature, therefore, whether animate or inanimate, mentally self-conscious or not self-conscious, is governed in its being and in its operations by an indwelling Vision and Power, to us subconscient or inconscient because we are not conscious of it, but not inconscient to itself, rather profoundly and universally conscient. Therefore each thing seems to do the works of intelligence, even without possessing intelligence, because it obeys, whether subconsciously as in the plant and animal or half-consciously as in man, the real-idea of the divine Supermind within it. But it is not a mental Intelligence that informs and governs all things; it is a self-aware Truth of being in which self-knowledge is inseparable from self-existence: it is this Truth-Consciousness which has not to think out things but works them out with knowledge according to the impeccable self-vision and the inevitable force of a sole and self-fulfilling Existence. Mental intelligence thinks out because it is merely a reflecting force of consciousness which does not know, but seeks to know; it follows in Time step by step the working of a knowledge higher than itself, a knowledge that exists always, one and whole, that holds Time in its grasp, that sees past, present and future in a single regard.

This, then, is the first operative principle of the divine Supermind; it is a cosmic vision which is all-comprehensive, all-pervading, all-inhabiting. Because it comprehends all things in

[1] A Vedic expression. The gods act according to the first laws, original and therefore supreme, which are the law of the truth of things.

[2] *Gita*, XVIII. 61. [3] *Isha Upanishad*, Verse 8.

being and static self-awareness, subjective, timeless, spaceless, therefore it comprehends all things in dynamic knowledge and governs their objective self-embodiment in Space and Time.

In this consciousness the knower, knowledge and the known are not different entities, but fundamentally one. Our mentality makes a distinction between these three because without distinctions it cannot proceed; losing its proper means and fundamental law of action, it becomes motionless and inactive. Therefore, even when I regard myself mentally, I have still to make this distinction. I am, as the knower; what I observe in myself, I regard as the object of my knowledge, myself yet not myself; knowledge is an operation by which I link the knower to the known. But the artificiality, the purely practical and utilitarian character of this operation is evident; it is evident that it does not represent the fundamental truth of things. In reality, I the knower am the consciousness which knows; the knowledge is that consciousness, myself, operating; the known is also myself, a form or movement of the same consciousness. The three are clearly one existence, one movement, indivisible though seeming to be divided, not distributed between its forms although appearing to distribute itself and to stand separate in each. But this is a knowledge which the mind can arrive at, can reason out, can feel, but cannot readily make the practical basis of its intelligent operations. And with regard to objects external to the form of consciousness which I call myself, the difficulty becomes almost insuperable; even to feel unity there is an abnormal effort and to retain it, to act upon it continually would be a new and foreign action not properly belonging to the Mind. Mind can at most hold it as an understood truth so as to correct and modify by it its own normal activities which are still based upon division, somewhat as we know intellectually that the earth moves round the sun and are able to correct by it but not abolish the artificial and physically practical arrangement by which the senses persist in regarding the sun as in motion round the earth.

But the Supermind possesses and acts always, fundamentally, on this truth of unity which to the mind is only a secondary or acquired possession and not the very grain of its seeing. Supermind sees the universe and its contents as itself in a single

indivisible act of knowledge, an act which is its life, which is the very movement of its self-existence. Therefore this comprehensive divine consciousness in its aspect of Will does not so much guide or govern the development of cosmic life as consummate it in itself by an act of power which is inseparable from the act of knowledge and from the movement of self-existence, is indeed one and the same act. For we have seen that universal force and universal consciousness are one, — cosmic force is the operation of cosmic consciousness. So also divine Knowledge and divine Will are one; they are the same fundamental movement or act of existence.

This indivisibility of the comprehensive Supermind which contains all multiplicity without derogating from its own unity, is a truth upon which we have always to insist, if we are to understand the cosmos and get rid of the initial error of our analytic mentality. A tree evolves out of the seed in which it is already contained, the seed out of the tree; a fixed law, an invariable process reigns in the permanence of the form of manifestation which we call a tree. The mind regards this phenomenon, this birth, life and reproduction of a tree, as a thing in itself and on that basis studies, classes and explains it. It explains the tree by the seed, the seed by the tree; it declares a law of Nature. But it has explained nothing; it has only analysed and recorded the process of a mystery. Supposing even that it comes to perceive a secret conscious force as the soul, the real being of this form and the rest as merely a settled operation and manifestation of that force, still it tends to regard the form as a separate existence with its separate law of nature and process of development. In the animal and in man with his conscious mentality this separative tendency of the Mind induces it to regard itself also as a separate existence, the conscious subject, and other forms as separate objects of its mentality. This useful arrangement, necessary to life and the first basis of all its practice, is accepted by the mind as an actual fact and thence proceeds all the error of the ego.

But the Supermind works otherwise. The tree and its process would not be what they are, could not indeed exist, if it were a separate existence; forms are what they are by the force of

the cosmic existence, they develop as they do as a result of their relation to it and to all its other manifestations. The separate law of their nature is only an application of the universal law and truth of all Nature; their particular development is determined by their place in the general development. The tree does not explain the seed, nor the seed the tree ; cosmos explains both and God explains cosmos. The Supermind, pervading and inhabiting at once the seed and the tree and all objects, lives in this greater knowledge which is indivisible and one though with a modified and not an absolute indivisibility and unity. In this comprehensive knowledge there is no independent centre of existence, no individual separated ego such as we see in ourselves; the whole of existence is to its self-awareness an equable extension, one in oneness, one in multiplicity, one in all conditions and everywhere. Here the All and the One are the same existence; the individual being does not and cannot lose the consciousness of its identity with all beings and with the One Being; for that identity is inherent in supramental cognition, a part of the supramental self-evidence.

In that spacious equality of oneness the Being is not divided and distributed; equably self-extended, pervading its extension as One, inhabiting as One the multiplicity of forms, it is everywhere at once the single and equal Brahman. For this extension of the Being in Time and Space and this pervasion and indwelling is in intimate relation with the absolute Unity from which it has proceeded, with that absolute Indivisible in which there is no centre or circumference but only the timeless and spaceless One. That high concentration of unity in the unextended Brahman must necessarily translate itself in the extension by this equal pervasive concentration, this indivisible comprehension of all things, this universal undistributed immanence, this unity which no play of multiplicity can abrogate or diminish. "Brahman is in all things, all things are in Brahman, all things are Brahman", is the triple formula of the comprehensive Supermind, a single truth of self-manifestation in three aspects which it holds together and inseparably in its self-view as the fundamental knowledge from which it proceeds to the play of the cosmos.

But what then is the origin of mentality and the organisation

of this lower consciousness in the triple terms of Mind, Life and Matter which is our view of the universe? For since all things that exist must proceed from the action of the all-efficient Supermind, from its operation in the three original terms of Existence, Conscious-Force and Bliss, there must be some faculty of the creative Truth-Consciousness which so operates as to cast them into these new terms, into this inferior trio of mentality, vitality and physical substance. This faculty we find in a secondary power of the creative knowledge, its power of a projecting, confronting and apprehending consciousness in which knowledge centralises itself and stands back from its works to observe them. And when we speak of centralisation, we mean, as distinguished from the equable concentration of consciousness of which we have hitherto spoken, an unequal concentration in which there is the beginning of self-division, — or of its phenomenal appearance.

First of all, the Knower holds himself concentrated in knowledge as subject and regards his Force of consciousness as if continually proceeding from him into the form of himself, continually working in it, continually drawing back into himself, continually issuing forth again. From this single act of self-modification proceed all the practical distinctions upon which the relative view and the relative action of the universe is based. A practical distinction has been created between the Knower, Knowledge and the Known, between the Lord, His force and the children and works of the Force, between the Enjoyer, the Enjoyment and the Enjoyed, between the Self, Maya and the becomings of the Self.

Secondly, this conscious Soul concentrated in knowledge, this Purusha observing and governing the Force that has gone forth from him, his Shakti or Prakriti, repeats himself in every form of himself. He accompanies, as it were, his Force of consciousness into its works and reproduces there the act of self-division from which this apprehending consciousness is born. In each form this Soul dwells with his Nature and observes himself in other forms from that artificial and practical centre of consciousness. In all it is the same Soul, the same divine Being; the multiplication of centres is only a practical act of consciousness intended to institute a play of difference, of mutuality,

mutual knowledge, mutual shock of force, mutual enjoyment, a difference based upon essential unity, a unity realised on a practical basis of difference.

We can speak of this new status of the all-pervading Supermind as a further departure from the unitarian truth of things and from the indivisible consciousness which constitutes inalienably the unity essential to the existence of the cosmos. We can see that pursued a little farther it may become truly Avidya, the great Ignorance which starts from multiplicity as the fundamental reality and in order to travel back to real unity has to commence with the false unity of the ego. We can see also that once the individual centre is accepted as the determining standpoint, as the knower, mental sensation, mental intelligence, mental action of will and all their consequences cannot fail to come into being. But also we have to see that so long as the soul acts in the Supermind, Ignorance has not yet begun; the field of knowledge and action is still the Truth-Consciousness, the basis is still the unity.

For the Self still regards itself as one in all and all things as becomings in itself and of itself; the Lord still knows his Force as himself in act and every being as himself in soul and himself in form; it is still his own being that the Enjoyer enjoys, even though in a multiplicity. The one real change has been an unequal concentration of consciousness and a multiple distribution of force. There is a practical distinction in consciousness, but there is no essential difference of consciousness or true division in its vision of itself. The Truth-Consciousness has arrived at a position which prepares our mentality, but is not yet that of our mentality. And it is this that we must study in order to seize Mind at its origin, at the point where it makes its great lapse from the high and vast wideness of the Truth-Consciousness into the division and the ignorance. Fortunately, this apprehending Truth-Consciousness[1] is much more facile to our grasp by its nearness to us, by its foreshadowing of our mental operations than the remoter realisation that we have hitherto been struggling to express in our inadequate language of the intellect. The barrier that has to be crossed is less formidable.

[1] *Prajñāna.*

CHAPTER XVI

The Triple Status of Supermind

> My self is that which supports all beings and constitutes their existence.... I am the self which abides within all beings.
>
> *Gita.*[1]

> Three powers of Light uphold three luminous worlds divine.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[2]

BEFORE we pass to this easier understanding of the world we inhabit from the standpoint of an apprehending Truth-Consciousness which sees things as would an individual soul freed from the limitations of mentality and admitted to participate in the action of the Divine Supermind, we must pause and resume briefly what we have realised or can yet realise of the consciousness of the Lord, the Ishwara as He develops the world by His Maya out of the original concentrated unity of His being.

We have started with the assertion of all existence as one Being whose essential nature is Consciousness, one Consciousness whose active nature is Force or Will; and this Being is Delight, this Consciousness is Delight, this Force or Will is Delight. Eternal and inalienable Bliss of Existence, Bliss of Consciousness, Bliss of Force or Will whether concentrated in itself and at rest or active and creative, this is God and this is ourselves in our essential, our non-phenomenal being. Concentrated in itself, it possesses or rather is the essential, eternal, inalienable Bliss; active and creative, it possesses or rather becomes the delight of the play of existence, the play of consciousness, the play of force and will. That play is the universe and that delight is the sole cause, motive and object of cosmic existence. The Divine Consciousness possesses that play and delight eternally and inalienably; our essential being, our real self which is concealed from us by the false self or mental ego, also enjoys that play and delight eternally and inalienably and cannot indeed do otherwise since it is one in being with the Divine Consciousness. If we aspire therefore to a divine life, we cannot attain to it by any

[1] IX. 5; X. 20. [2] V. 29. 1.

other way than by unveiling this veiled self in us, by mounting from our present status in the false self or mental ego to a higher status in the true self, the Atman, by entering into that unity with the Divine Consciousness which something superconscient in us always enjoys, — otherwise we could not exist, — but which our conscious mentality has forfeited.

But when we thus assert this unity of Sachchidananda on the one hand and this divided mentality on the other, we posit two opposite entities one of which must be false if the other is to be held as true, one of which must be abolished if the other is to be enjoyed. Yet it is in the mind and its form of life and body that we exist on earth and, if we must abolish the consciousness of mind, life and body in order to reach the one Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, then a divine life here is impossible. We must abandon cosmic existence utterly as an illusion in order to enjoy or re-become the Transcendent. From this solution there is no escape unless there be an intermediate link between the two which can explain them to each other and establish between them such a relation as will make it possible for us to realise the one Existence, Consciousness, Delight in the mould of the mind, life and body.

The intermediate link exists. We call it the Supermind or the Truth-Consciousness, because it is a principle superior to mentality and exists, acts and proceeds in the fundamental truth and unity of things and not like the mind in their appearances and phenomenal divisions. The existence of the Supermind is a logical necessity arising directly from the position with which we have started. For in itself Sachchidananda must be a spaceless and timeless absolute of conscious existence that is bliss; but the world is, on the contrary, an extension in Time and Space and a movement, a working out, a development of relations and possibilities by causality — or what so appears to us — in Time and Space. The true name of this Causality is Divine Law and the essence of that Law is an inevitable self-development of the truth of the thing that is, as Idea, in the very essence of what is developed; it is a previously fixed determination of relative movements out of the stuff of infinite possibility. That which thus develops all things must be a Knowledge-Will or Conscious-

Force; for all manifestation of universe is a play of the Conscious-Force which is the essential nature of existence. But the developing Knowledge-Will cannot be mental; for mind does not know, possess or govern this Law, but is governed by it, is one of its results, moves in the phenomena of the self-development and not at its root, observes as divided things the results of the development and strives in vain to arrive at their source and reality. Moreover this Knowledge-Will which develops all must be in possession of the unity of things and must out of it manifest their multiplicity; but mind is not in possession of that unity, it has only an imperfect possession of a part of the multiplicity.

Therefore there must be a principle superior to the Mind which satisfies the conditions in which Mind fails. No doubt, it is Sachchidananda itself that is this principle, but Sachchidananda not resting in its pure infinite invariable consciousness, but proceeding out of this primal poise, or rather upon it as a base and in it as a continent, into a movement which is its form of Energy and instrument of cosmic creation. Consciousness and Force are the twin essential aspects of the pure Power of existence; Knowledge and Will must therefore be the form which that Power takes in creating a world of relations in the extension of Time and Space. This Knowledge and this Will must be one, infinite, all-embracing, all-possessing, all-forming, holding eternally in itself that which it casts into movement and form. The Supermind then is Being moving out into a determinative self-knowledge which perceives certain truths of itself and wills to realise them in a temporal and spatial extension of its own timeless and spaceless existence. Whatever is in its own being, takes form as self-knowledge, as Truth-Consciousness, as Real-Idea, and, that self-knowledge being also self-force, fulfils or realises itself inevitably in Time and Space.

This, then, is the nature of the Divine Consciousness which creates in itself all things by a movement of its conscious-force and governs their development through a self-evolution by inherent knowledge-will of the truth of existence or real-idea which has formed them. The Being that is thus conscient is what we call God; and He must obviously be omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. Omnipresent, for all forms are forms of His con-

scious being created by its force of movement in its own extension as Space and Time; omniscient, for all things exist in His conscious-being, are formed by it and possessed by it; omnipotent, for this all-possessing consciousness is also an all-possessing Force and all-informing Will. And this Will and Knowledge are not at war with each other as our will and knowledge are capable of being at war with each other, because they are not different but are one movement of the same being. Nor can they be contradicted by any other will, force or consciousness from outside or within; for there is no consciousness or force external to the One, and all energies and formations of knowledge within are not other than it, but are merely play of the one all-determining Will and the one all-harmonising Knowledge. What we see as a clash of wills and forces, because we dwell in the particular and divided and cannot see the whole, the Supermind envisages as the conspiring elements of a predetermined harmony which is always present to it because the totality of things is eternally subject to its gaze.

Whatever be the poise or form its action takes, this will always be the nature of the divine Consciousness. But, its existence being absolute in itself, its power of existence is also absolute in its extension, and it is not therefore limited to one poise or one form of action. We, human beings, are phenomenally a particular form of consciousness, subject to Time and Space, and can only be, in our surface consciousness which is all we know of ourselves, one thing at a time, one formation, one poise of being, one aggregate of experience; and that one thing is for us the truth of ourselves which we acknowledge; all the rest is either not true or no longer true, because it has disappeared into the past out of our ken, or not yet true, because it is waiting in the future and not yet in our ken. But the Divine Consciousness is not so particularised, nor so limited; it can be many things at a time and take more than one enduring poise even for all time. We find that in the principle of Supermind itself it has three such general poises or sessions of its world-founding consciousness. The first founds the inalienable unity of things, the second modifies that unity so as to support the manifestation of the Many in One and One in Many; the third further modifies it so as to

support the evolution of a diversified individuality which, by the action of Ignorance, becomes in us at a lower level the illusion of the separate ego.

We have seen what is the nature of this first and primary poise of the Supermind which founds the inalienable unity of things. It is not the pure unitarian consciousness; for that is a timeless and spaceless concentration of Sachchidananda in itself, in which Conscious Force does not cast itself out into any kind of extension and, if it contains the universe at all, contains it in eternal potentiality and not in temporal actuality. This, on the contrary, is an equal self-extension of Sachchidananda all-comprehending, all-possessing, all-constituting. But this all is one, not many; there is no individualisation. It is when the reflection of this Supermind falls upon our stilled and purified self that we lose all sense of individuality; for there is no concentration of consciousness there to support an individual development. All is developed in unity and as one; all is held by this Divine Consciousness as forms of its existence, not as in any degree separate existences. Somewhat as the thoughts and images that occur in our mind are not separate existences to us, but forms taken by our consciousness, so are all names and forms to this primary Supermind. It is the pure divine ideation and formation in the Infinite, — only an ideation and formation that is organised not as an unreal play of mental thought, but as a real play of conscious being. The divine soul in this poise would make no difference between Conscious-Soul and Force-Soul, for all force would be action of consciousness, nor between Matter and Spirit since all mould would be simply form of Spirit.

In the second poise of the Supermind the Divine Consciousness stands back in the idea from the movement which it contains, realising it by a sort of apprehending consciousness, following it, occupying and inhabiting its works, seeming to distribute itself in its forms. In each name and form it would realise itself as the stable Conscious-Self, the same in all; but also it would realise itself as a concentration of Conscious-Self following and supporting the individual play of movement and upholding its differentiation from other play of movement, — the same everywhere in soul-essence, but varying in soul-form. This

concentration supporting the soul-form would be the individual Divine or Jivatman as distinguished from the universal Divine or one all-constituting self. There would be no essential difference, but only a practical differentiation for the play which would not abrogate the real unity. The universal Divine would know all soul-forms as itself and yet establish a different relation with each separately and in each with all the others. The individual Divine would envisage its existence as a soul-form and soul-movement of the One and, while by the comprehending action of consciousness it would enjoy its unity with the One and with all soul-forms, it would also by a forward or frontal apprehending action support and enjoy its individual movement and its relations of a free difference in unity both with the One and with all its forms. If our purified mind were to reflect this secondary poise of Supermind, our soul could support and occupy its individual existence and yet even there realise itself as the One that has become all, inhabits all, contains all, enjoying even in its particular modification its unity with God and its fellows. In no other circumstance of the supramental existence would there be any characteristic change; the only change would be this play of the One that has manifested its multiplicity and of the Many that are still one, with all that is necessary to maintain and conduct the play.

A third poise of the Supermind would be attained if the supporting concentration were no longer to stand at the back, as it were, of the movement, inhabiting it with a certain superiority to it and so following and enjoying, but were to project itself into the movement and to be in a way involved in it. Here, the character of the play would be altered, but only in so far as the individual Divine would so predominantly make the play of relations with the universal and with its other forms the practical field of its conscious experience that the realisation of utter unity with them would be only a supreme accompaniment and constant culmination of all experience; but in the higher poise unity would be the dominant and fundamental experience and variation would be only a play of the unity. This tertiary poise would be therefore that of a sort of fundamental blissful dualism in unity — no longer unity qualified by a subordinate dualism —

between the individual Divine and its universal source, with all the consequences that would accrue from the maintenance and operation of such a dualism.

It may be said that the first consequence would be a lapse into the ignorance of Avidya which takes the Many for the real fact of existence and views the One only as a cosmic sum of the Many. But there would not necessarily be any such lapse. For the individual Divine would still be conscious of itself as the result of the One and of its power of conscious self-creation, that is to say, of its multiple self-centration conceived so as to govern and enjoy manifoldly its manifold existence in the extension of Time and Space; this true spiritual individual would not arrogate to itself an independent or separate existence. It would only affirm the truth of the differentiating movement along with the truth of the stable unity, regarding them as the upper and lower poles of the same truth, the foundation and culmination of the same divine play; and it would insist on the joy of the differentiation as necessary to the fullness of the joy of the unity.

Obviously, these three poises would be only different ways of dealing with the same Truth; the Truth of existence enjoyed would be the same, the way of enjoying it or rather the poise of the soul in enjoying it would be different. The delight, the Ananda would vary, but would abide always within the status of the Truth-Consciousness and involve no lapse into the Falsehood and the Ignorance. For the secondary and tertiary Supermind would only develop and apply in the terms of the divine multiplicity what the primary Supermind had held in the terms of the divine unity. We cannot stamp any of these three poises with the stigma of falsehood and illusion. The language of the Upanishads, the supreme ancient authority for these truths of a higher experience, when they speak of the Divine existence which is manifesting itself, implies the validity of all these experiences. We can only assert the priority of the oneness to the multiplicity, a priority not in time but in relation of consciousness, and no statement of supreme spiritual experience, no Vedantic philosophy denies this priority or the eternal dependence of the Many on the One. It is because in Time the Many seem not to be eternal but to manifest out of the One and return into it as their

essence that their reality is denied; but it might equally be reasoned that the eternal persistence or, if you will, the eternal recurrence of the manifestation in Time is a proof that the divine multiplicity is an eternal fact of the Supreme beyond Time no less than the divine unity; otherwise it could not have this characteristic of inevitable eternal recurrence in Time.

It is indeed only when our human mentality lays an exclusive emphasis on one side of spiritual experience, affirms that to be the sole eternal truth and states it in the terms of our all-dividing mental logic that the necessity for mutually destructive schools of philosophy arises. Thus, emphasising the sole truth of the unitarian consciousness, we observe the play of the divine unity, erroneously rendered by our mentality into the terms of real difference, but, not satisfied with correcting this error of the mind by the truth of a higher principle, we assert that the play itself is an illusion. Or, emphasising the play of the One in the Many, we declare a qualified unity and regard the individual soul as a soul-form of the Supreme, but would assert the eternity of this qualified existence and deny altogether the experience of a pure consciousness in an unqualified oneness. Or, again, emphasising the play of difference, we assert that the Supreme and the human soul are eternally different and reject the validity of an experience which exceeds and seems to abolish that difference. But the position that we have now firmly taken absolves us from the necessity of these negations and exclusions: we see that there is a truth behind all these affirmations, but at the same time an excess which leads to an ill-founded negation. Affirming, as we have done, the absolute absoluteness of That, not limited by our ideas of unity, not limited by our ideas of multiplicity, affirming the unity as a basis for the manifestation of the multiplicity and the multiplicity as the basis for the return to oneness and the enjoyment of unity in the divine manifestation, we need not burden our present statement with these discussions or undertake the vain labour of enslaving to our mental distinctions and definitions the absolute freedom of the Divine Infinite.

CHAPTER XVII

The Divine Soul

> He whose self has become all existences, for he has the knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief, he who sees everywhere oneness?
>
> *Isha Upanishad.*[1]

BY THE conception we have formed of the Supermind, by its opposition to the mentality on which our human existence is based, we are able not only to form a precise instead of a vague idea of divinity and the divine life, — expressions which we are otherwise condemned to use with looseness and as the vague wording of a large but almost impalpable aspiration, — but also to give these ideas a firm basis of philosophical reasoning, to put them into a clear relation with the humanity and the human life which is all we at present enjoy and to justify our hope and aspiration by the very nature of the world and of our own cosmic antecedents and the inevitable future of our evolution. We begin to grasp intellectually what is the Divine, the eternal Reality, and to understand how out of it the world has come. We begin also to perceive how inevitably that which has come out of the Divine must return to the Divine. We may now ask with profit and a chance of clearer reply how we must change and what we must become in order to arrive there in our nature and our life and our relations with others and not only through a solitary and ecstatic realisation in the profundities of our being. Certainly, there is still a defect in our premisses; for we have so far been striving to define for ourselves what the Divine is in its descent towards limited Nature, whereas what we ourselves actually are is the Divine in the individual ascending back out of limited Nature to its own proper divinity. This difference of movement must involve a difference between the life of the gods who have never known the fall and the life of man redeemed, conqueror of the lost godhead and bearing within him the experience and it may be the new riches gathered by him from his

[1] Verse 7.

acceptance of the utter descent. Nevertheless, there can be no difference of essential characteristics, but only of mould and colouring. We can already ascertain on the basis of the conclusions at which we have arrived the essential nature of the divine life towards which we aspire.

What then would be the existence of a divine soul, not descended into the ignorance by the fall of Spirit into Matter and the eclipse of soul by material Nature? What would be its consciousness, living in the original Truth of things, in the inalienable unity, in the world of its own infinite being, like the Divine Existence itself, but able by the play of the Divine Maya and by the distinction of the comprehending and apprehending Truth-Consciousness to enjoy also difference from God at the same time as unity with Him and to embrace difference and yet oneness with other divine souls in the infinite play of the self-multiplied Identical?

Obviously, the existence of such a soul would be always self-contained in the conscious play of Sachchidananda. It would be pure and infinite self-existence in its being; in its becoming it would be a free play of immortal life uninvaded by death and birth and change of body because unclouded by ignorance and not involved in the darkness of our material being. It would be a pure and unlimited consciousness in its energy, poised in an eternal and luminous tranquillity as its foundation, yet able to play freely with forms of knowledge and forms of conscious power, tranquil, unaffected by the stumblings of mental error and the misprisions of our striving will because it never departs from truth and oneness, never falls from the inherent light and the natural harmony of its divine existence. It would be, finally, a pure and inalienable delight in its eternal self-experience and in Time a free variation of bliss unaffected by our perversions of dislike, hatred, discontent and suffering because undivided in being, unbaffled by erring self-will, unperverted by the ignorant stimulus of desire.

Its consciousness would not be shut out from any part of the infinite truth, nor limited by any poise or status that it might assume in its relations with others, nor condemned to any loss of self-knowledge by its acceptance of a purely phenomenal indi-

viduality and the play of practical differentiation. It would in its self-experience live eternally in the presence of the Absolute. To us the Absolute is only an intellectual conception of indefinable existence. The intellect tells us simply that there is a Brahman higher than the highest,[1] an Unknowable that knows itself in other fashion than that of our knowledge; but the intellect cannot bring us into its presence. The divine soul living in the Truth of things would, on the contrary, always have the conscious sense of itself as a manifestation of the Absolute. Its immutable existence it would be aware of as the original "self-form"[2] of that Transcendent, — Sachchidananda; its play of conscious being it would be aware of as manifestation of That in forms of Sachchidananda. In its every state or act of knowledge it would be aware of the Unknowable cognising itself by a form of variable self-knowledge; in its every state or act of power, will or force aware of the Transcendence possessing itself by a form of conscious power of being and knowledge; in its every state or act of delight, joy or love aware of the Transcendence embracing itself by a form of conscious self-enjoyment. This presence of the Absolute would not be with it as an experience occasionally glimpsed or finally arrived at and held with difficulty or as an addition, acquisition or culmination superimposed on its ordinary state of being: it would be the very foundation of its being both in the unity and the differentiation; it would be present to it in all its knowing, willing, doing, enjoying; it would be absent neither from its timeless self nor from any moment of Time, neither from its spaceless being nor from any determination of its extended existence, neither from its unconditioned purity beyond all cause and circumstance nor from any relation of circumstance, condition and causality. This constant presence of the Absolute would be the basis of its infinite freedom and delight, ensure its security in the play and provide the root and sap and essence of its divine being.

Moreover, such a divine soul would live simultaneously in the two terms of the eternal existence of Sachchidananda, the two inseparable poles of the self-unfolding of the Absolute which

[1] *parātpara.* [2] *svarūpa.*

we call the One and the Many. All being does really so live: but to our divided self-awareness there is an incompatibility, a gulf between the two driving us towards a choice, to dwell either in the multiplicity exiled from the direct and entire consciousness of the One or in the unity repellent of the consciousness of the Many. But the divine soul would not be enslaved to this divorce and duality. It would be aware in itself at once of the infinite self-concentration and the infinite self-extension and diffusion. It would be aware simultaneously of the One in its unitarian consciousness holding the innumerable multiplicity in itself as if potential, unexpressed and therefore to our mental experience of that state non-existent and of the One in its extended consciousness holding the multiplicity thrown out and active as the play of its own conscious being, will and delight. It would equally be aware of the Many ever drawing down to themselves the One that is the eternal source and reality of their existence and of the Many ever mounting up attracted to the One that is the eternal culmination and blissful justification of all their play of difference. This vast view of things is the mould of the Truth-Consciousness, the foundation of the large Truth and Right hymned by the Vedic seers; this unity of all these terms of opposition is the real Adwaita, the supreme comprehending word of the knowledge of the Unknowable.

The divine soul will be aware of all variation of being, consciousness, will and delight as the outflowing, the extension, the diffusion of that self-concentrated Unity developing itself, not into difference and division, but into another, an extended form of infinite oneness. It will itself always be concentrated in oneness in the essence of its being, always manifested in variation in the extension of its being. All that takes form in itself will be the manifested potentialities of the One, the Word or Name vibrating out of the nameless Silence, the Form realising the formless essence, the active Will or Power proceeding out of the tranquil Force, the ray of self-cognition gleaming out from the sun of timeless self-awareness, the wave of becoming rising up into shape of self-conscious existence out of the eternally self-conscious Being, the joy and love welling for ever out of the eternal still Delight. It will be the Absolute biune in its

self-unfolding, and each relativity in it will be absolute to itself because aware of itself as the Absolute manifested but without that ignorance which excludes other relativities as alien to its being or less complete than itself.

In the extension the divine soul will be aware of the three grades of the supramental existence, not as we are mentally compelled to regard them, not as grades, but as a triune fact of the self-manifestation of Sachchidananda. It will be able to embrace them in one and the same comprehensive self-realisation, — for a vast comprehensiveness is the foundation of the truth-conscious Supermind. It will be able divinely to conceive, perceive and sense all things as the Self, its own self, one self of all, one Self-being and Self-becoming, but not divided in its becomings which have no existence apart from its own self-consciousness. It will be able divinely to conceive, perceive and sense all existences as soul-forms of the One which have each its own being in the One, its own standpoint in the One, its own relations with all the other existences that people the infinite unity, but all dependent on the One, conscious form of Him in His own infinity. It will be able divinely to conceive, perceive and sense all these existences in their individuality, in their separate standpoint living as the individual Divine, each with the One and Supreme dwelling in it and each therefore not altogether a form or eidolon, not really an illusory part of a real whole, a mere foaming wave on the surface of an immobile Ocean, — for these are after all no more than inadequate mental images, — but a whole in the whole, a truth that repeats the infinite Truth, a wave that is all the sea, a relative that proves to be the Absolute itself when we look behind form and see it in its completeness.

For these three are aspects of the one Existence. The first is based upon that self-knowledge which, in our human realisation of the Divine, the Upanishad describes as the Self in us becoming all existences; the second on that which is described as seeing all existences in the Self; the third on that which is described as seeing the Self in all existences. The Self becoming all existences is the basis of our oneness with all; the Self containing all existences is the basis of our oneness in difference; the

Self inhabiting all is the basis of our individuality in the universal. If the defect of our mentality, if its need of exclusive concentration compels it to dwell on any one of these aspects of self-knowledge to the exclusion of the others, if a realisation imperfect as well as exclusive moves us always to bring in a human element of error into the very Truth itself and of conflict and mutual negation into the all-comprehending unity, yet to a divine supramental being, by the essential character of the Supermind which is a comprehending oneness and infinite totality, they must present themselves as a triple and indeed a triune realisation.

If we suppose this soul to take its poise, its centre in the consciousness of the individual Divine living and acting in distinct relation with the "others", still it will have in the foundation of its consciousness the entire unity from which all emerges and it will have in the background of that consciousness the extended and the modified unity and to any of these it will be capable of returning and of contemplating from them its individuality. In the Veda all these poises are asserted of the gods. In essence the gods are one existence which the sages call by different names; but in their action founded in and proceeding from the large Truth and Right Agni or another is said to be all the other gods, he is the One that becomes all; at the same time he is said to contain all the gods in himself as the nave of a wheel contains the spokes, he is the One that contains all; and yet as Agni he is described as a separate deity, one who helps all the others, exceeds them in force and knowledge, yet is inferior to them in cosmic position and is employed by them as messenger, priest and worker, — the creator of the world and father, he is yet the son born of our works, he is, that is to say, the original and the manifested indwelling Self or Divine, the One that inhabits all.

All the relations of the divine soul with God or its supreme Self and with its other selves in other forms will be determined by this comprehensive self-knowledge. These relations will be relations of being, of consciousness and knowledge, of will and force, of love and delight. Infinite in their potentiality of variation, they need exclude no possible relation of soul with soul

that is compatible with the preservation of the inalienable sense of unity in spite of every phenomenon of difference. Thus in its relations of enjoyment the divine soul will have the delight of all its own experience in itself; it will have the delight of all its experience of relation with others as a communion with other selves in other forms created for a varied play in the universe; it will have too the delight of the experiences of its other selves as if they were its own — as indeed they really are. And all this capacity it will have because it will be aware of its own experiences, of its relations with others and of the experiences of others and their relations with itself as all the joy or Ananda of the One, the supreme Self, its own self, differentiated by its separate habitation of all these forms comprehended in its own being but still one in difference. Because this unity is the basis of all its experience, it will be free from the discords of our divided consciousness, divided by ignorance and a separatist egoism; all these selves and their relations will play consciously into each other's hands; they will part and melt into each other as the numberless notes of an eternal harmony.

And the same rule will apply to the relations of its being, knowledge, will with the being, knowledge and will of others. For all its experience and delight will be the play of a self-blissful conscious force of being in which, by obedience to this truth of unity, will cannot be at strife with knowledge nor either of them with delight. Nor will the knowledge, will and delight of one soul clash with the knowledge, will and delight of another, because by their awareness of their unity what is clash and strife and discord in our divided being will be there the meeting, entwining and mutual interplay of the different notes of one infinite harmony.

In its relations with its supreme Self, with God, the divine soul will have this sense of the oneness of the transcendent and universal Divine with its own being. It will enjoy that oneness of God with itself in its own individuality and with its other selves in the universality. Its relations of knowledge will be the play of the divine omniscience, for God is Knowledge, and what is ignorance with us will be there only the holding back of knowledge in the repose of conscious self-awareness so that

certain forms of that self-awareness may be brought forward into activity of Light. Its relations of will will be there the play of the divine omnipotence, for God is Force, Will and Power, and what with us is weakness and incapacity will be the holding back of will in tranquil concentrated force so that certain forms of divine conscious-force may realise themselves brought forward into form of Power. Its relations of love and delight will be the play of the divine ecstasy, for God is Love and Delight, and what with us would be denial of love and delight will be the holding back of joy in the still sea of Bliss so that certain forms of divine union and enjoyment may be brought in front in an active upwelling of waves of the Bliss. So also all its becoming will be formation of the divine being in response to these activities and what is with us cessation, death, annihilation will be only rest, transition or holding back of the joyous creative Maya in the eternal being of Sachchidananda. At the same time this oneness will not preclude relations of the divine soul with God, with its supreme Self, founded on the joy of difference separating itself from unity to enjoy that unity otherwise; it will not annul the possibility of any of those exquisite forms of God-enjoyment which are the highest rapture of the God-lover in his clasp of the Divine.

But what will be the conditions in which and by which this nature of the life of the divine soul will realise itself? All experience in relation proceeds through certain forces of being formulating themselves by an instrumentation to which we give the name of properties, qualities, activities, faculties. As, for instance, Mind throws itself into various forms of mind-power, such as judgment, observation, memory, sympathy, proper to its own being, so must the Truth-Consciousness or Supermind effect the relations of soul with soul by forces, faculties, functionings proper to supramental being; otherwise there would be no play of differentiation. What these functionings are, we shall see when we come to consider the psychological conditions of the divine Life; at present we are only considering its metaphysical foundations, its essential nature and principles. Suffice it at present to observe that the absence or abolition of separatist egoism and of effective division in consciousness is the

one essential condition of the divine Life, and therefore their presence in us is that which constitutes our mortality and our fall from the Divine. This is our "original sin", or rather let us say in a more philosophical language, the deviation from the Truth and Right of the Spirit, from its oneness, integrality and harmony that was the necessary condition for the great plunge into the Ignorance which is the soul's adventure in the world and from which was born our suffering and aspiring humanity.

CHAPTER XVIII

Mind and Supermind

He discovered that Mind was the Brahman.

Taittiriya Upanishad.[1]

Indivisible, but as if divided in beings.

Gita.[2]

THE conception which we have so far been striving to form is that of the essence only of the supramental life which the divine soul possesses securely in the being of Sachchidananda, but which the human soul has to manifest in this body of Sachchidananda formed here into the mould of a mental and physical living. But so far as we have been able yet to envisage this supramental existence, it does not seem to have any connection or correspondence with life as we know it, life active between the two terms of our normal existence, the two firmaments of mind and body. It seems rather to be a state of being, a state of consciousness, a state of active relation and mutual enjoyment such as disembodied souls might possess and experience in a world without physical forms, a world in which differentiation of souls had been accomplished but not differentiation of bodies, a world of active and joyous infinities, not of form-imprisoned spirits. Therefore it might reasonably be doubted whether such a divine living would be possible with this limitation of bodily form and this limitation of form-imprisoned mind and form-trammelled force which is what we now know as existence.

In fact, we have striven to arrive at some conception of that supreme infinite being, conscious-force and self-delight of which our world is a creation and our mentality a perverse figure; we have tried to give ourselves an idea of what this divine Maya may be, this Truth-Consciousness, this Real-Idea by which the conscious force of the transcendent and universal Existence conceives, forms and governs the universe, the order, the cosmos of its manifested delight of being. But we have not studied the connections of these four great and divine terms with the three others with

[1] III. 4. [2] XIII. 17.

which our human experience is alone familiar, — mind, life and body. We have not scrutinised this other and apparently undivine Maya which is the root of all our striving and suffering or seen how precisely it develops out of the divine reality or the divine Maya. And till we have done this, till we have woven the missing cords of connection, our world is still unexplained to us and the doubt of a possible unification between that higher existence and this lower life has still a basis. We know that our world has come forth from Sachchidananda and subsists in His being; we conceive that He dwells in it as the Enjoyer and Knower, Lord and Self; we have seen that our dual terms of sensation, mind, force, being can only be representations of His delight, His conscious force, His divine existence. But it would seem that they are actually so much the opposite of what He really and supernally is that we cannot while dwelling in the cause of these opposites, cannot while contained in the lower triple term of existence attain to the divine living. We must either exalt this lower being into that higher status or exchange body for that pure existence, life for that pure condition of conscious-force, sensation and mentality for that pure delight and knowledge which live in the truth of the spiritual reality. And must not this mean that we abandon all earthly or limited mental existence for something which is its opposite, — either for some pure state of the Spirit or else for some world of the Truth of things, if such exists, or other worlds, if such exist, of divine Bliss, divine Energy, divine Being? In that case the perfection of humanity is elsewhere than in humanity itself; the summit of its earthly evolution can only be a fine apex of dissolving mentality whence it takes the great leap either into formless being or into worlds beyond the reach of embodied Mind.

But in reality all that we call undivine can only be an action of the four divine principles themselves, such action of them as was necessary to create this universe of forms. Those forms have been created not outside but in the divine existence, conscious-force and bliss, not outside but in and as a part of the working of the divine Real-Idea. There is therefore no reason to suppose that there cannot be any real play of the higher divine consciousness in a world of forms or that forms and their imme-

diate supports, mental consciousness, energy of vital force and formal substance, must necessarily distort that which they represent. It is possible, even probable that mind, body and life are to be found in their pure forms in the divine Truth itself, are there in fact as subordinate activities of its consciousness and part of the complete instrumentation by which the supreme Force always works. Mind, life and body must then be capable of divinity; their form and working in that short period out of possibly only one cycle of the terrestrial evolution which Science reveals to us, need not represent all the potential workings of these three principles in the living body. They work as they do because they are by some means separated in consciousness from the divine Truth from which they proceed. Were this separation once abrogated by the expanding energy of the Divine in humanity, their present functioning might well be converted, would indeed naturally be converted by a supreme evolution and progression into that purer working which they have in the Truth-Consciousness.

In that case not only would it be possible to manifest and maintain the divine consciousness in the human mind and body but, even, that divine consciousness might in the end, increasing its conquests, remould mind, life and body themselves into a more perfect image of its eternal Truth and realise not only in soul but in substance its kingdom of heaven upon earth. The first of these victories, the internal, has certainly been achieved in a greater or less degree by some, perhaps by many, upon earth; the other, the external, even if never more or less realised in past aeons as a first type for future cycles and still held in the subconscious memory of the earth-nature, may yet be intended as a coming victorious achievement of God in humanity. This earthly life need not be necessarily and for ever a wheel of half-joyous half-anguished effort; attainment may also be intended and the glory and joy of God made manifest upon earth.

What Mind, Life and Body are in their supreme sources and what therefore they must be in the integral completeness of the divine manifestation when informed by the Truth and not cut off from it by the separation and the ignorance in which presently we live, — this then is the problem that we have next to consider.

For there they must have already their perfection towards which we here are growing, — we who are only the first shackled movement of the Mind which is evolving in Matter, we who are not yet liberated from the conditions and effects of that involution of spirit in form, that plunge of Light into its own shadow by which the darkened material consciousness of physical Nature was created. The type of all perfection towards which we grow, the terms of our highest evolution must already be held in the divine Real-Idea; they must be there formed and conscious for us to grow towards and into them: for that pre-existence in the divine knowledge is what our human mentality names and seeks as the Ideal. The Ideal is an eternal Reality which we have not yet realised in the conditions of our own being, not a non-existent which the Eternal and Divine has not yet grasped and only we imperfect beings have glimpsed and mean to create.

Mind, first, the chained and hampered sovereign of our human living. Mind in its essence is a consciousness which measures, limits, cuts out forms of things from the indivisible whole and contains them as if each were a separate integer. Even with what exists only as obvious parts and fractions, Mind establishes this fiction of its ordinary commerce that they are things with which it can deal separately and not merely as aspects of a whole. For, even when it knows that they are not things in themselves, it is obliged to deal with them as if they were things in themselves; otherwise it could not subject them to its own characteristic activity. It is this essential characteristic of Mind which conditions the workings of all its operative powers, whether conception, perception, sensation or the dealings of creative thought. It conceives, perceives, senses things as if rigidly cut out from a background or a mass and employs them as fixed units of the material given to it for creation or possession. All its action and enjoyment deal thus with wholes that form part of a greater whole, and these subordinate wholes again are broken up into parts which are also treated as wholes for the particular purposes they serve. Mind may divide, multiply, add, subtract, but it cannot get beyond the limits of this mathematics. If it goes beyond and tries to conceive a real whole, it loses itself in a foreign element; it falls from its own firm ground into the ocean of the

intangible, into the abysms of the infinite where it can neither perceive, conceive, sense nor deal with its subject for creation and enjoyment. For if Mind appears sometimes to conceive, to perceive, to sense or to enjoy with possession the infinite, it is only in seeming and always in a figure of the infinite. What it does thus vaguely possess is simply a formless Vast and not the real spaceless infinite. The moment it tries to deal with that, to possess it, at once the inalienable tendency to delimitation comes in and the Mind finds itself again handling images, forms and words. Mind cannot possess the infinite, it can only suffer it or be possessed by it; it can only lie blissfully helpless under the luminous shadow of the Real cast down on it from planes of existence beyond its reach. The possession of the infinite cannot come except by an ascent to those supramental planes, nor the knowledge of it except by an inert submission of Mind to the descending messages of the Truth-Conscious Reality.

This essential faculty and the essential limitation that accompanies it are the truth of Mind and fix its real nature and action, *svabhāva* and *svadharma*; here is the mark of the divine fiat assigning it its office in the complete instrumentation of the supreme Maya, — the office determined by that which it is in its very birth from the eternal self-conception of the Self-existent. That office is to translate always infinity into the terms of the finite, to measure off, limit, depiece. Actually it does this in our consciousness to the exclusion of all true sense of the infinite; therefore Mind is the nodus of the great Ignorance, because it is that which originally divides and distributes, and it has even been mistaken for the cause of the universe and for the whole of the divine Maya. But the divine Maya comprehends Vidya as well as Avidya, the Knowledge as well as the Ignorance. For it is obvious that since the finite is only an appearance of the infinite, a result of its action, a play of its conception and cannot exist except by it, in it, with it as a background, itself form of that stuff and action of that force, there must be an original consciousness which contains and views both at the same time and is intimately conscious of all the relations of the one with the other. In that consciousness there is no ignorance, because the infinite is known and the finite is not separated from it as an independent reality;

but still there is a subordinate process of delimitation, — otherwise no world could exist, — a process by which the ever dividing and reuniting consciousness of Mind, the ever divergent and convergent action of Life and the infinitely divided and self-aggregating substance of Matter come, all by one principle and original act, into phenomenal being. This subordinate process of the eternal Seer and Thinker, perfectly luminous, perfectly aware of Himself and all, knowing well what He does, conscious of the infinite in the finite which He is creating, may be called the divine Mind. And it is obvious that it must be a subordinate and not really a separate working of the Real-Idea, of the Supermind, and must operate through what we have described as the apprehending movement of the Truth-Consciousness.

That apprehending consciousness, the Prajnana, places, as we have seen, the working of the indivisible All, active and formative, as a process and object of creative knowledge before the consciousness of the same All, originative and cognisant as the possessor and witness of its own working, — somewhat as a poet views the creations of his own consciousness placed before him in it as if they were things other than the creator and his creative force, yet all the time they are really no more than the play of self-formation of his own being in itself and are indivisible there from their creator. Thus Prajnana makes the fundamental division which leads to all the rest, the division of the Purusha, the conscious soul who knows and sees and by his vision creates and ordains, and the Prakriti, the Force-Soul or Nature-Soul which is his knowledge and his vision, his creation and his all-ordaining power. Both are one Being, one existence, and the forms seen and created are multiple forms of that Being which are placed by Him as Knowledge before Himself as Knower, by Himself as Force before Himself as Creator. The last action of this apprehending consciousness takes place when the Purusha pervading the conscious extension of his being, present at every point of himself as well as in his totality, inhabiting every form, regards the whole as if separately, from each of the standpoints he has taken; he views and governs the relations of each soul-form of himself with other soul-forms from the standpoint of will and knowledge appropriate to each particular form.

menon of being and keeps hold of its existence in the reality of being; it does not forfeit its unity: it uses mind as a subordinate action of the infinite knowledge, a definition of things subordinate to its awareness of infinity, a delimitation dependent on its awareness of essential totality — not that apparent and pluralistic totality of sum and collective aggregation which is only another phenomenon of Mind. Thus there is no real limitation; the soul uses its defining power for the play of well-distinguished forms and forces and is not used by that power.

A new factor, a new action of conscious force is therefore needed to create the operation of a helplessly limited as opposed to a freely limiting mind, — that is to say, of mind subject to its own play and deceived by it as opposed to mind master of its own play and viewing it in its truth, the creature mind as opposed to the divine. That new factor is Avidya, the self-ignoring faculty which separates the action of mind from the action of the Supermind that originated and still governs it from behind the veil. Thus separated, Mind perceives only the particular and not the universal, or conceives only the particular in an unpossessed universal and no longer both particular and universal as phenomena of the Infinite. Thus we have the limited mind which views every phenomenon as a thing-in-itself, separate part of a whole which again exists separately in a greater whole and so on, enlarging always its aggregates without getting back to the sense of a true infinity.

Mind, being an action of the Infinite, depieces as well as aggregates *ad infinitum.* It cuts up being into wholes, into ever smaller wholes, into atoms and those atoms into primal atoms, until it would, if it could, dissolve the primal atom into nothingness. But it cannot, because behind this dividing action is the saving knowledge of the supramental which knows every whole, every atom to be only a concentration of all-force, of all-consciousness, of all-being into phenomenal forms of itself. The dissolution of the aggregate into an infinite nothingness at which Mind seems to arrive, is to the Supermind only the return of the self-concentrating conscious-being out of its phenomenon into its infinite existence. Whichever way its consciousness proceeds, by the way of infinite division or by the way of

infinite enlargement, it arrives only at itself, at its own infinite unity and eternal being. And when the action of the mind is consciously subordinate to this knowledge of the Supermind, the truth of the process is known to it also and not at all ignored; there is no real division but only an infinitely multiple concentration into forms of being and into arrangements of the relation of those forms of being to each other in which division is a subordinate appearance of the whole process necessary to their spatial and temporal play. For divide as you will, get down to the most infinitesimal atom or form the most monstrous possible aggregate of worlds and systems, you cannot get by either process to a thing-in-itself; all are forms of a Force which alone is real in itself while the rest are real only as self-imagings or manifesting self-forms of the eternal Force-Consciousness.

Whence then does the limiting Avidya, the fall of mind from Supermind and the consequent idea of real division originally proceed? exactly from what perversion of the supramental functioning? It proceeds from the individualised soul viewing everything from its own standpoint and excluding all others; it proceeds, that is to say, by an exclusive concentration of consciousness, an exclusive self-identification of the soul with a particular temporal and spatial action which is only a part of its own play of being; it starts from the soul's ignoring the fact that all others are also itself, all other action its own action and all other states of being and consciousness equally its own as well as the action of the one particular moment in Time and one particular standing-point in Space and the one particular form it presently occupies. It concentrates on the moment, the field, the form, the movement so as to lose the rest; it has then to recover the rest by linking together the succession of moments, the succession of points of Space, the succession of forms in Time and Space, the succession of movements in Time and Space. It has thus lost the truth of the indivisibility of Time, the indivisibility of Force and Substance. It has lost sight even of the obvious fact that all minds are one Mind taking many standpoints, all lives one Life developing many currents of activity, all body and form one substance of Force and Consciousness concentrating into many apparent stabilities of force and

consciousness; but in truth all these stabilities are really only a constant whorl of movement repeating a form while it modifies it; they are nothing more. For the Mind tries to clamp everything into rigidly fixed forms and apparently unchanging or unmoving external factors, because otherwise it cannot act; it then thinks it has got what it wants: in reality all is a flux of change and renewal and there is no fixed form-in-itself and no unchanging external factor. Only the eternal Real-Idea is firm and maintains a certain ordered constancy of figures and relations in the flux of things, a constancy which the Mind vainly attempts to imitate by attributing fixity to that which is always inconstant. These truths Mind has to rediscover; it knows them all the time, but only in the hidden back of its consciousness, in the secret light of its self-being; and that light is to it a darkness because it has created the ignorance, because it has lapsed from the dividing into the divided mentality, because it has become involved in its own workings and in its own creations.

This ignorance is farther deepened for man by his self-identification with the body. To us mind seems to be determined by the body, because it is preoccupied with that and devoted to the physical workings which it uses for its conscious superficial action in this gross material world. Employing constantly that operation of the brain and nerves which it has developed in the course of its own development in the body, it is too absorbed in observing what this physical machinery gives to it to get back from it to its own pure workings; those are to it mostly subconscious. Still we can conceive a life mind or life being which has got beyond the evolutionary necessity of this absorption and is able to see and even experience itself assuming body after body and not created separately in each body and ending with it; for it is only the physical impress of mind on matter, only the corporeal mentality that is so created, not the whole mental being. This corporeal mentality is merely our surface of mind, merely the front which it presents to physical experience. Behind, even in our terrestrial being, there is this other, subconscious or subliminal to us, which knows itself as more than the body and is capable of a less materialised action. To this we owe immediately most of the larger, deeper and more

forceful dynamic action of our surface mind; this, when we become conscious of it or of its impress on us, is our first idea or our first realisation of a soul or inner being, Purusha.[1]

But this life mentality also, though it may get free from the error of body, does not make us free from the whole error of mind; it is still subject to the original act of ignorance by which the individualised soul regards everything from its own standpoint and can see the truth of things only as they present themselves to it from outside or else as they rise up to its view from its separate temporal and spatial consciousness, forms and results of past and present experience. It is not conscious of its other selves except by the outward indications they give of their existence, indications of communicated thought, speech, action, result of actions, or subtler indications — not felt directly by the physical being — of vital impact and relation. Equally is it ignorant of itself; for it knows of its self only through a movement in Time and a succession of lives in which it has used its variously embodied energies. As our physical instrumental mind has the illusion of the body, so this subconscious dynamic mind has the illusion of life. In that it is absorbed and concentrated, by that it is limited, with that it identifies its being. Here we do not yet get back to the meeting-place of mind and Supermind and the point at which they originally separated.

But there is still another clearer reflective mentality behind the dynamic and vital which is capable of escaping from this absorption in life and views itself as assuming life and body in order to image out in active relations of energy that which it perceives in will and thought. It is the source of the pure thinker in us; it is that which knows mentality in itself and sees the world not in terms of life and body but of mind; it is that[2] which, when we get back to it, we sometimes mistake for the pure spirit as we mistake the dynamic mind for the soul. This higher mind is able to perceive and deal with other souls as other forms of its pure self; it is capable of sensing them by pure mental impact and communication and no longer only by vital and nervous impact and physical indications; it conceives too a mental figure of unity,

[1] Perceived as the life being or vital being, *prāṇamaya puruṣa.*

[2] The mental being, *manomaya puruṣa.*

and in its activity and its will it can create and possess more directly — not only indirectly as in the ordinary physical life — and in other minds and lives as well as its own. But still even this pure mentality does not escape from the original error of mind. For it is still its separate mental self which it makes the judge, witness and centre of the universe and through it alone strives to arrive at its own higher self and reality; all others are "others" grouped to it around itself: when it wills to be free, it has to draw back from life and mind in order to disappear into the real unity. For there is still the veil created by Avidya between the mental and supramental action; an image of the Truth gets through, not the Truth itself.

It is only when the veil is rent and the divided mind overpowered, silent and passive to a supramental action that mind itself gets back to the Truth of things. There we find a luminous mentality reflective, obedient and instrumental to the divine Real-Idea. There we perceive what the world really is; we know in every way ourselves in others and as others, others as ourselves and all as the universal and self-multiplied One. We lose the rigidly separate individual standpoint which is the source of all limitation and error. Still, we perceive also that all that the ignorance of Mind took for the truth was in fact truth but truth deflected, mistaken and falsely conceived. We still perceive the division, the individualising, the atomic creation, but we know them and ourselves for what they and we really are. And so we perceive that the Mind was really a subordinate action and instrumentation of the Truth-Consciousness. So long as it is not separated in self-experience from the enveloping Master-Consciousness and does not try to set up house for itself, so long as it serves passively as an instrumentation and does not attempt to possess for its own benefit, Mind fulfils luminously its function which is in the Truth to hold forms apart from each other by a phenomenal, a purely formal delimitation of their activity behind which the governing universality of the being remains conscious and untouched. It has to receive the truth of things and distribute it according to the unerring perception of a supreme and universal Eye and Will. It has to uphold an individualisation of active consciousness, delight, force, substance which

derives all its power, reality and joy from an inalienable universality behind. It has to turn the multiplicity of the One into an apparent division by which relations are defined and held off against each other so as to meet again and join. It has to establish the delight of separation and contact in the midst of an eternal unity and intermiscence. It has to enable the One to behave as if He were an individual dealing with other individuals but always in His own unity, and this is what the world really is. The mind is the final operation of the apprehending Truth-Consciousness which makes all this possible, and what we call the Ignorance does not create a new thing and absolute falsehood but only misrepresents the Truth. The Ignorance is the Mind separated in knowledge from its source of knowledge and giving a false rigidity and a mistaken appearance of opposition and conflict to the harmonious play of the supreme Truth in its universal manifestation.

The fundamental error of the Mind is, then, this fall from self-knowledge by which the individual soul conceives of its individuality as a separate fact instead of as a form of Oneness and makes itself the centre of its own universe instead of knowing itself as one concentration of the universal. From that original error all its particular ignorances and limitations are contingent results. For, viewing the flux of things only as it flows upon and through itself, it makes a limitation of being from which proceeds a limitation of consciousness and therefore of knowledge, a limitation of conscious force and will and therefore of power, a limitation of self-enjoyment and therefore of delight. It is conscious of things and knows them only as they present themselves to its individuality and therefore it falls into an ignorance of the rest and thereby into an erroneous conception even of that which it seems to know: for since all being is interdependent, the knowledge either of the whole or of the essence is necessary for the right knowledge of the part. Hence there is an element of error in all human knowledge. Similarly our will, ignorant of the rest of the all-will, must fall into error of working and a greater or less degree of incapacity and impotence; the soul's self-delight and delight of things, ignoring the all-bliss and by defect of will and knowledge unable to master its world, must fall into incapacity

of possessive delight and therefore into suffering. Self-ignorance is therefore the root of all the perversity of our existence, and that perversity stands fortified in the self-limitation, the egoism which is the form taken by that self-ignorance.

Yet is all ignorance and all perversity only the distortion of the truth and right of things and not the play of an absolute falsehood. It is the result of Mind viewing things in the division it makes, *avidyāyām antare*, instead of viewing itself and its divisions as instrumentation and phenomenon of the play of the truth of Sachchidananda. If it gets back to the truth from which it fell, it becomes again the final action of the Truth-Consciousness in its apprehensive operation, and the relations it helps to create in that light and power will be relations of the Truth and not of the perversity. They will be the straight things and not the crooked, to use the expressive distinction of the Vedic Rishis, — Truths, that is to say, of divine being with its self-possessive consciousness, will and delight moving harmoniously in itself. Now we have rather the warped and zigzag movement of mind and life, the contortions created by the struggle of the soul once grown oblivious of its true being to find itself again, to resolve back all error into the truth which both our truth and our error, our right and our wrong limit or distort, all incapacity into the strength which both our power and our weakness are a struggle of force to grasp, all suffering into the delight which both our joy and our pain are a convulsive effort of sensation to realise, all death into the immortality to which both our life and our death are a constant effort of being to return.

CHAPTER XIX

Life

> Pranic energy is the life of creatures; for that is said to be the universal principle of life.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[1]

WE PERCEIVE, then, what Mind is in its divine origin and how it is related to the Truth-Consciousness, — Mind, the highest of the three lower principles which constitute our human existence. It is a special action of the divine consciousness or rather, it is the final strand of its whole creative action. It enables the Purusha to hold apart the relations of different forms and forces of himself to each other; it creates phenomenal differences which to the individual soul fallen from the Truth-Consciousness take the appearance of radical divisions, and is by that original perversion the parent of all the resultant perversions which impress us as the contrary dualities and oppositions proper to the life of the Soul in the Ignorance. But so long as it is not separated from the Supermind, it supports, not perversions and falsehoods, but the various working of the universal Truth.

Mind thus appears as a creative cosmic agency. This is not the impression which we normally have of our mentality; rather we regard it primarily as a perceptive organ, perceptive of things already created by Force working in Matter, and the only origination we allow to it is a secondary creation of new combined forms from those already developed by Force in Matter. But the knowledge we are now recovering, aided by the last discoveries of Science, begins to show us that in this Force and in this Matter there is a subconscious Mind at work which is certainly responsible for its own emergence, first in the forms of life and secondly in the forms of mind itself, first in the nervous consciousness of plant-life and the primitive animal, secondly in the ever-developing mentality of the evolved animal and of man. And as we have already discovered that Matter is only substance-form of Force, so we shall discover that material Force is only

[1] II. 3.

energy-form of Mind. Material force is, in fact, a subconscious operation of Will; Will that works in us in what seems to be light, though it is in truth no more than a half-light, and material Force that works in what to us seems to be a darkness of unintelligence, are yet really and in essence the same, as materialistic thought has always instinctively felt from the wrong or lower end of things and as spiritual knowledge working from the summit had long ago discovered. We may say, therefore, that it is a subconscious Mind or Intelligence which, manifesting Force as its driving-power, its executive Nature, its Prakriti, has created this material world.

But since, as we have now found, Mind is no independent and original entity but only a final operation of the Truth-Consciousness or Supermind, therefore wherever Mind is, there Supermind must be. Supermind or the Truth-Consciousness is the real creative agency of the universal Existence. Even when Mind is in its own darkened consciousness separated from its source, yet is that larger movement always there in the workings of Mind; forcing them to preserve their right relation, evolving from them the inevitable results they bear in themselves, producing the right tree from the right seed, it compels even the operations of so brute, inert and darkened a thing as material Force to result in a world of Law, of order, of right relation and not, as it would otherwise be, of hurtling chance and chaos. Obviously, this order and right relation can only be relative and not the supreme order and supreme right which would reign if Mind were not in its own consciousness separated from Supermind; it is an arrangement, an order of the results right and proper to the action of dividing Mind and its creation of separative oppositions, its dual contrary sides of the one Truth. The Divine Consciousness, having conceived and thrown into operation the Idea of this dual or divided representation of itself, deduces from it in real-idea and educes practically from it in substance of life, by the governing action of the whole Truth-Consciousness behind it, its own inferior truth or inevitable result of various relation. For this is the nature of Law or Truth in the world that it is the just working and bringing out of that which is contained in being, implied in the essence and nature of the thing itself, latent in its

insanity from which we have to flee into the repose of eternal being. Is it so? and why then is it so? Why has the Eternal wantonly inflicted this evil, brought this delirium or insanity upon Himself or else upon the creatures brought into being by His terrible all-deluding Maya? Or is it rather some divine principle that thus expresses itself, some power of the Delight of eternal being that had to express and has thus thrown itself into Time and Space in this constant outburst of the million and million forms of life which people the countless worlds of the universe?

When we study this Life as it manifests itself upon earth with Matter as its basis, we observe that essentially it is a form of the one cosmic Energy, a dynamic movement or current of it positive and negative, a constant act or play of the Force which builds up forms, energises them by a continual stream of stimulation and maintains them by an unceasing process of disintegration and renewal of their substance. This would tend to show that the natural opposition we make between death and life is an error of our mentality, one of those false oppositions — false to inner truth though valid in surface practical experience — which, deceived by appearances, it is constantly bringing into the universal unity. Death has no reality except as a process of life. Disintegration of substance and renewal of substance, maintenance of form and change of form are the constant process of life; death is merely a rapid disintegration subservient to life's necessity of change and variation of formal experience. Even in the death of the body there is no cessation of Life, only the material of one form of life is broken up to serve as material for other forms of life. Similarly we may be sure, in the uniform law of Nature, that if there is in the bodily form a mental or psychic energy, that also is not destroyed but only breaks out from one form to assume others by some process of metempsychosis or new ensouling of body. All renews itself, nothing perishes.

It could be affirmed as a consequence that there is one all-pervading Life or dynamic energy — the material aspect being only its outermost movement — that creates all these forms of the physical universe, Life imperishable and eternal which, even if the whole figure of the universe were quite abolished, would itself still go on existing and be capable of producing a new uni-

verse in its place, must indeed, unless it be held back in a state of rest by some higher Power or hold itself back, inevitably go on creating. In that case Life is nothing else than the Force that builds and maintains and destroys forms in the world; it is Life that manifests itself in the form of the earth as much as in the plant that grows upon the earth and the animals that support their existence by devouring the life-force of the plant or of each other. All existence here is a universal Life that takes form of Matter. It might for that purpose hide life-process in physical process before it emerges as submental sensitivity and mentalised vitality, but still it would be throughout the same creative Life-principle.

It will be said, however, that this is not what we mean by life; we mean a particular result of universal force with which we are familiar and which manifests itself only in the animal and the plant, but not in the metal, the stone, the gas, operates in the animal cell but not in the pure physical atom. We must, therefore, in order to be sure of our ground, examine in what precisely consists this particular result of the play of Force which we call life and how it differs from that other result of the play of Force in inanimate things which, we say, is not life. We see at once that there are here on earth three realms of the play of Force, the animal kingdom of the old classification to which we belong, the vegetable, and lastly the mere material void, as we pretend, of life. How does life in ourselves differ from the life of the plant, and the life of the plant from the not-life, say, of the metal, the mineral kingdom of the old phraseology, or that new chemical kingdom which Science has discovered?

Ordinarily, when we speak of life, we have meant animal life, that which moves, breathes, eats, feels, desires, and, if we speak of the life of plants, it has been almost as a metaphor rather than a reality, for plant life was regarded as a purely material process rather than a biological phenomenon. Especially we have associated life with breathing; the breath is life, it was said in every language, and the formula is true if we change our conception of what we mean by the Breath of Life. But it is evident that spontaneous motion or locomotion, breathing, eating are only processes of life and not life itself; they are means for the generation

or release of that constantly stimulating energy which is our vitality and for that process of disintegration and renewal by which it supports our substantial existence; but these processes of our vitality can be maintained in other ways than by our respiration and our means of sustenance. It is a proved fact that even human life can remain in the body and can remain in full consciousness when breathing and the beating of the heart and other conditions formerly deemed essential to it have been temporarily suspended. And new evidence of phenomena has been brought forward to establish that the plant, to which we can still deny any conscious reaction, has at least a physical life identical with our own and even organised essentially like our own though different in its apparent organisation. If that is proved true, we will have to make a clean sweep of our old facile and false conceptions and get beyond symptoms and externalities to the root of the matter.

In some recent discoveries[1] which, if their conclusions are accepted, must throw an intense light on the problem of Life in Matter, a great Indian physicist has pointed attention to the response to stimulus as an infallible sign of the existence of life. It is especially the phenomenon of plant-life that has been illumined by his data and illustrated in all its subtle functionings; but we must not forget that in the essential point the same proof of vitality, the response to stimulus, the positive state of life and its negative state which we call death, have been affirmed by him in metals as in the plant. Not indeed with the same abundance, not indeed so as to show an essentially identical organisation of life; but it is possible that, could instruments of the right nature and sufficient delicacy be invented, more points of similarity between the metal and plant life could be discovered; and even if it prove

[1] These considerations drawn from recent scientific researches are brought in here as illustrative, not probative of the nature and process of Life in Matter as they are developed here. Science and metaphysics (whether founded on pure intellectual speculation or, as in India, ultimately on a spiritual vision of things and spiritual experience) have each its own province and method of inquiry. Science cannot dictate its conclusions to metaphysics any more than metaphysics can impose its conclusions on Science. Still if we accept the reasonable belief that Being and Nature in all their states have a system of correspondences expressive of a common Truth underlying them, it is permissible to suppose that truths of the physical universe can throw some light on the nature as well as the process of the Force that is active in the universe — not a complete light, for physical Science is necessarily incomplete in the range of its inquiry and has no clue to the occult movements of the Force.

not to be so, this might mean that the same or any life organisation is absent, but the beginnings of vitality could still be there. But if life, however rudimentary in its symptoms, exists in the metal, it must be admitted as present, involved perhaps or elementary and elemental in the earth or other material existences akin to the metal. If we can pursue our inquiries farther, not obliged to stop short where our immediate means of investigation fail us, we may be sure from our unvarying experience of Nature that investigations thus pursued will in the end prove to us that there is no break, no rigid line of demarcation between the earth and the metal formed in it or between the metal and the plant and, pursuing the synthesis farther, that there is none either between the elements and atoms that constitute the earth or metal and the metal or earth that they constitute. Each step of this graded existence prepares the next, holds in itself what appears in that which follows it. Life is everywhere, secret or manifest, organised or elemental, involved or evolved, but universal, all-pervading, imperishable; only its forms and organisings differ.

We must remember that the physical response to stimulus is only an outward sign of life, even as are breathing and locomotion in ourselves. An exceptional stimulus is applied by the experimenter and vivid responses are given which we can at once recognise as indices of vitality in the object of the experiment. But during its whole existence the plant is responding constantly to a constant mass of stimulation from its environment; that is to say, there is a constantly maintained force in it which is capable of responding to the application of force from its surroundings. It is said that the idea of a vital force in the plant or other living organism has been destroyed by these experiments. But when we say that a stimulus has been applied to the plant, we mean that an energised force, a force in dynamic movement has been directed on that object, and when we say that a response is given, we mean that an energised force capable of dynamic movement and of sensitive vibration answers to the shock. There is a vibrant reception and reply, as well as a will to grow and be, indicative of a submental, a vital-physical organisation of consciousness-force hidden in the form of being. The fact would seem to be, then, that as there is a constant dynamic energy in move-

ment in the universe which takes various material forms more or less subtle or gross, so in each physical body or object, plant or animal or metal, there is stored and active the same constant dynamic force; a certain interchange of these two gives us the phenomena which we associate with the idea of life. It is this action that we recognise as the action of Life-Energy and that which so energises itself is the Life-Force. Mind-Energy, Life-Energy, material Energy are different dynamisms of one World-Force.

Even when a form appears to us to be dead, this force still exists in it in potentiality although its familiar operations of vitality are suspended and about to be permanently ended. Within certain limits that which is dead can be revived; the habitual operations, the response, the circulation of active energy can be restored; and this proves that what we call life was still there in the body, latent, that is to say, not active in its usual habits, its habits of ordinary physical functioning, its habits of nervous play and response, its habits in the animal of conscious mental response. It is difficult to suppose that there is a distinct entity called life which has gone entirely out of the body and gets into it again when it feels — how, since there is nothing to connect it with the body? — that somebody is stimulating the form. In certain cases, such as catalepsy, we see that the outward physical signs and operations of life are suspended, but the mentality is there self-possessed and conscious although unable to compel the usual physical responses. Certainly, it is not the fact that the man is physically dead but mentally alive or that life has gone out of the body while mind still inhabits it, but only that the ordinary physical functioning is suspended, while the mental is still active.

So also, in certain forms of trance, both the physical functionings and the outward mental are suspended, but afterwards resume their operation, in some cases by external stimulation, but more normally by a spontaneous return to activity from within. What has really happened is that the surface mind-force has been withdrawn into subconscious mind and the surface life-force into sub-active life and either the whole man has lapsed into the subconscious existence or else he has withdrawn his outer life into the subconscious while his inner being has been lifted

into the superconscient. But the main point for us at present is that the Force, whatever it be, that maintains dynamic energy of life in the body, has indeed suspended its outer operations, but still informs the organised substance. A point comes, however, at which it is no longer possible to restore the suspended activities; and this occurs when either such a lesion has been inflicted on the body as makes it useless or incapable of the habitual functionings or, in the absence of such lesion, when the process of disintegration has begun, that is to say, when the Force that should renew the life-action becomes entirely inert to the pressure of the environing forces with whose mass of stimulation it was wont to keep up a constant interchange. Even then there is Life in the body, but a Life that is busy only with the process of disintegrating the formed substance so that it may escape in its elements and constitute with them new forms. The Will in the universal force that held the form together, now withdraws from constitution and supports instead a process of dispersion. Not till then is there the real death of the body.

Life then is the dynamic play of a universal Force, a Force in which mental consciousness and nervous vitality are in some form or at least in their principle always inherent and therefore they appear and organise themselves in our world in the forms of Matter. The life-play of this Force manifests itself as an interchange of stimulation and response to stimulation between the different forms it has built up and in which it keeps up its constant dynamic pulsation; each form is constantly taking into itself and giving out again the breath and energy of the common Force; each form feeds upon that and nourishes itself with it by various means, whether indirectly by taking in other forms in which the energy is stored or directly by absorbing the dynamic discharges it receives from outside. All this is the play of Life; but it is chiefly recognisable to us where the organisation of it is sufficient for us to perceive its more outward and complex movements and especially where it partakes of the nervous type of vital energy which belongs to our own organisation. It is for this reason that we are ready enough to admit life in the plant because obvious phenomena of life are there, — and this becomes still easier if it can be shown that it manifests symptoms of

nervosity and has a vital system not very different from our own, — but are unwilling to recognise it in the metal and the earth and the chemical atom where these phenomenal developments can with difficulty be detected or do not apparently at all exist.

Is there any justification for elevating this distinction into an essential difference? What, for instance, is the difference between life in ourselves and life in the plant? We see that they differ, first, in our possession of the power of locomotion which has evidently nothing to do with the essence of vitality, and, secondly, in our possession of conscious sensation which is, so far as we know, not yet evolved in the plant. Our nervous responses are largely, though by no means always or in their entirety, attended with the mental response of conscious sensation; they have a value to the mind as well as to the nerve-system and the body agitated by the nervous action. In the plant it would seem that there are symptoms of nervous sensation, including those which would be in us rendered as pleasure and pain, waking and sleep, exhilaration, dullness and fatigue, and the body is inwardly agitated by the nervous action, but there is no sign of the actual presence of mentally conscious sensation. But sensation is sensation whether mentally conscious or vitally sensitive, and sensation is a form of consciousness. When the sensitive plant shrinks from a contact, it appears that it is nervously affected, that something in it dislikes the contact and tries to draw away from it; there is, in a word, a subconscious sensation in the plant, just as there are, as we have seen, subconscious operations of the same kind in ourselves. In the human system it is quite possible to bring these subconscious perceptions and sensations to the surface long after they have happened and have ceased to affect the nervous system; and an ever-increasing mass of evidence has irrefutably established the existence of a subconscious mentality in us much vaster than the conscious. The mere fact that the plant has no superficially vigilant mind which can be awakened to the valuation of its subconscious sensations, makes no difference to the essential identity of the phenomena. The phenomena being the same, the thing they manifest must be the same, and that thing is a subconscious mind. And it is quite possible that there is a more rudimentary life operation of the subcon-

scious sense-mind in the metal, although in the metal there is no bodily agitation corresponding to the nervous response; but the absence of bodily agitation makes no essential difference to the presence of vitality in the metal any more than the absence of bodily locomotion makes an essential difference to the presence of vitality in the plant.

What happens when the conscious becomes subconscious in the body or the subconscious becomes conscious? The real difference lies in the absorption of the conscious energy in part of its work, its more or less exclusive concentration. In certain forms of concentration, what we call the mentality, that is to say, the Prajnana or apprehensive consciousness almost or quite ceases to act consciously, yet the work of the body and the nerves and the sense-mind goes on unnoticed but constant and perfect; it has all become subconscious and only in one activity or chain of activities is the mind luminously active. While I write, the physical act of writing is largely or sometimes entirely done by the subconscious mind; the body makes, unconsciously as we say, certain nervous movements; the mind is awake only to the thought with which it is occupied. The whole man indeed may sink into the subconscious, yet habitual movements implying the action of mind may continue, as in many phenomena of sleep; or he may rise into the superconscient and yet be active with the subliminal mind in the body, as in certain phenomena of *samādhi* or Yoga trance. It is evident, then, that the difference between plant sensation and our sensation is simply that in the plant the conscious Force manifesting itself in the universe has not yet fully emerged from the sleep of Matter, from the absorption which entirely divides the worker Force from its source of work in the superconscient knowledge, and therefore does subconsciously what it will do consciously when it emerges in man from its absorption and begins to wake, though still indirectly, to its knowledge-self. It does exactly the same things but in a different way and with a different value in terms of consciousness.

It is becoming possible now to conceive that in the very atom there is something that becomes in us a will and a desire, there is an attraction and repulsion which, though phenomenally other,

are essentially the same thing as liking and disliking in ourselves, but are, as we say, inconscient or subconscient. This essence of will and desire are evident everywhere in Nature and, though this is not yet sufficiently envisaged, they are associated with and indeed the expression of a subconscient or, if you will, inconscient or quite involved sense and intelligence which are equally pervasive. Present in every atom of Matter all this is necessarily present in everything which is formed by the aggregation of those atoms; and they are present in the atom because they are present in the Force which builds up and constitutes the atom. That Force is fundamentally the Chit-Tapas or Chit-Shakti of the Vedanta, consciousness-force, inherent conscious force of conscious-being, which manifests itself as nervous energy full of submental sensation in the plant, as desire-sense and desire-will in the primary animal forms, as self-conscious sense and force in the developing animal, as mental will and knowledge topping all the rest in man. Life is a scale of the universal Energy in which the transition from inconscience to consciousness is managed; it is an intermediary power of it latent or submerged in Matter, delivered by its own force into submental being, delivered finally by the emergence of Mind into the full possibility of its dynamis.

Apart from all other considerations, this conclusion imposes itself as a logical necessity if we observe even the surface process of the emergence in the light of the evolutionary theme. It is self-evident that Life in the plant, even if otherwise organised than in the animal, is yet the same power, marked by birth and growth and death, propagation by the seed, death by decay or malady or violence, maintenance by indrawing of nourishing elements from without, dependence on light and heat, productiveness and sterility, even states of sleep and waking, energy and depression of life-dynamism, passage from infancy to maturity and age; the plant contains, moreover, the essences of the force of life and is therefore the natural food of animal existences. If it is conceded that it has a nervous system and reaction to stimuli, a beginning or undercurrent of submental or purely vital sensations, the identity becomes closer; but still it remains evidently a stage of life evolution intermediate between animal existence and "inani-

mate" Matter. This is precisely what must be expected if Life is a force evolving out of Matter and culminating in Mind, and, if it is that, then we are bound to suppose that it is already there in Matter itself submerged or latent in the material subconsciousness or inconscience. For from where else can it emerge? Evolution of Life in matter supposes a previous involution of it there, unless we suppose it to be a new creation magically and unaccountably introduced into Nature. If it is that, it must either be a creation out of nothing or a result of material operations which is not accounted for by anything in the operations themselves or by any element in them which is of a kindred nature; or, conceivably, it may be a descent from above, from some supraphysical plane above the material universe. The two first suppositions can be dismissed as arbitrary conceptions; the last explanation is possible and it is quite conceivable and in the occult view of things true that a pressure from some plane of Life above the material universe has assisted the emergence of life here. But this does not exclude the origin of life from Matter itself as a primary and necessary movement; for the existence of a Life-world or Life-plane above the material does not of itself lead to the emergence of Life in matter unless that Life-plane exists as a formative stage in a descent of Being through several grades or powers of itself into the Inconscience with the result of an involution of itself with all these powers in Matter for a later evolution and emergence. Whether signs of this submerged life are discoverable, unorganised yet or rudimentary, in material things or there are no such signs, because this involved Life is in a full sleep, is not a question of capital importance. The material Energy that aggregates, forms and disaggregates[1] is the same Power in another grade of itself as that Life-Energy which expresses itself in birth, growth and death, just as by its doing

[1] Birth, growth and death of life are in their outward aspect the same process of aggregation, formation and disaggregation, though more than that in their inner process and significance. Even the ensoulment of the body by the psychic being follows, if the occult view of these things is correct, a similar outward process, for the soul as nucleus draws to itself for birth and aggregates the elements of its mental, vital and physical sheaths and their contents, increases these formations in life, and in its departing drops and disaggregates again these aggregates, drawing back into itself its inner powers, till in rebirth it repeats the original process.

of the works of Intelligence in a somnambulist subconscience it betrays itself as the same Power that in yet another grade attains the status of Mind; its very character shows that it contains in itself, though not yet in their characteristic organisation or process, the yet undelivered powers of Mind and Life.

Life then reveals itself as essentially the same everywhere from the atom to man, the atom containing the subconscious stuff and movement of being which are released into consciousness in the animal, with plant life as a midway stage in the evolution. Life is really a universal operation of Conscious-Force acting subconsciously on and in Matter; it is the operation that creates, maintains, destroys and re-creates forms or bodies and attempts by play of nerve-force, that is to say, by currents of interchange of stimulating energy to awake conscious sensation in those bodies. In this operation there are three stages; the lowest is that in which the vibration is still in the sleep of Matter, entirely subconscious so as to seem wholly mechanical; the middle stage is that in which it becomes capable of a response still submental but on the verge of what we know as consciousness; the highest is that in which life develops conscious mentality in the form of a mentally perceptible sensation which in this transition becomes the basis for the development of sense-mind and intelligence. It is in the middle stage that we catch the idea of Life as distinguished from Matter and Mind, but in reality it is the same in all the stages and always a middle term between Mind and Matter, constituent of the latter and instinct with the former. It is an operation of Conscious-Force which is neither the mere formation of substance nor the operation of mind with substance and form as its object of apprehension; it is rather an energising of conscious being which is a cause and support of the formation of substance and an intermediate source and support of conscious mental apprehension. Life, as this intermediate energising of conscious being, liberates into sensitive action and reaction a form of the creative force of existence which was working subconsciently or inconsciently, absorbed in its own substance; it supports and liberates into action the apprehensive consciousness of existence called mind and gives it a dynamic instrumentation so that it can work not only on its own forms but

on forms of life and matter; it connects too, and supports, as a middle term between them, the mutual commerce of the two, mind and matter. This means of commerce Life provides in the continual currents of her pulsating nerve-energy which carry force of the form as a sensation to modify Mind and bring back force of Mind as will to modify Matter. It is therefore this nerve-energy which we usually mean when we talk of Life; it is the Prana or Life-force of the Indian system. But nerve-energy is only the form it takes in the animal being; the same Pranic energy is present in all forms down to the atom, since everywhere it is the same in essence and everywhere it is the same operation of Conscious-Force, — Force supporting and modifying the substantial existence of its own forms, Force with sense and mind secretly active but at first involved in the form and preparing to emerge, then finally emerging from their involution. This is the whole significance of the omnipresent Life that has manifested and inhabits the material universe.

CHAPTER XX

Death, Desire and Incapacity

> In the beginning all was covered by Hunger that is Death; that made for itself Mind so that it might attain to possession of self.
>
> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*[1]

> This is the Power discovered by the mortal that has the multitude of its desires so that it may sustain all things; it takes the taste of all foods and builds a house for the being.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[2]

IN OUR last chapter we have considered Life from the point of view of the material existence and the appearance and working of the vital principle in Matter and we have reasoned from the data which this evolutionary terrestrial existence offers. But it is evident that wherever it may appear and however it may work, under whatsoever conditions, the general principle must be everywhere the same. Life is universal Force working so as to create, energise, maintain and modify, even to the extent of dissolving and reconstructing, substantial forms with mutual play and interchange of an overtly or secretly conscious energy as its fundamental character. In the material world we inhabit Mind is involved and subconscious in Life, just as Supermind is involved and subconscious in Mind, and this Life instinct with an involved subconscious Mind is again itself involved in Matter. Therefore Matter is here the basis and the apparent beginning; in the language of the Upanishads, Prithivi, the Earth-principle, is our foundation. The material universe starts from the formal atom surcharged with energy, instinct with the unformed stuff of a subconscious desire, will, intelligence. Out of this Matter apparent Life manifests and it delivers out of itself by means of the living body the Mind it contains imprisoned within it; Mind also has still to deliver out of itself the Supermind concealed in its workings. But we can conceive a world otherwise constituted in which Mind is not involved at the start but consciously uses its innate energy to create original forms of

[1] I. 2. 1. [2] V. 7. 6.

substance and is not, as here, only subconscious in the beginning. Still though the working of such a world would be quite different from ours, the intermediate vehicle of operation of that energy would always be Life. The thing itself would be the same, even if the process were entirely reversed.

But then it appears immediately that as Mind is only a final operation of Supermind, so Life is only a final operation of the Consciousness-Force of which Real-Idea is the determinative form and creative agent. Consciousness that is Force is the nature of Being and this conscious Being manifested as a creative Knowledge-Will is the Real-Idea or Supermind. The supramental Knowledge-Will is Consciousness-Force rendered operative for the creation of forms of united being in an ordered harmony to which we give the name of world or universe; so also Mind and Life are the same Consciousness-Force, the same Knowledge-Will, but operating for the maintenance of distinctly individual forms in a sort of demarcation, opposition and interchange in which the soul in each form of being works out its own mind and life as if they were separate from the others, though in fact they are never separate but are the play of the one Soul, Mind, Life in different forms of its single reality. In other words, as Mind is the final individualising operation of the all-comprehending and all-apprehending Supermind, the process by which its consciousness works individualised in each form from the standpoint proper to it and with the cosmic relations which proceed from that standpoint, so Life is the final operation by which the Force of Conscious-Being acting through the all-possessing and all-creative Will of the universal Supermind maintains and energises, constitutes and reconstitutes individual forms and acts in them as the basis of all the activities of the soul thus embodied. Life is the energy of the Divine continually generating itself in forms as in a dynamo and not only playing with the outgoing battery of its shocks on surrounding forms of things but receiving itself the incoming shocks of all life around as they pour in upon and penetrate the form from outside, from the environing universe.

In this view Life appears as a form of energy of consciousness intermediary and appropriate to the action of Mind on Matter;

in a sense, it may be said to be an energy aspect of Mind when it creates and relates itself no longer to ideas, but to motions of force and to forms of substance. But it must immediately be added that just as Mind is not a separate entity, but has all Supermind behind it and it is Supermind that creates with Mind only as its final individualising operation, so Life also is not a separate entity or movement, but has all Conscious-Force behind it in every one of its workings and it is that Conscious-Force alone which exists and acts in created things. Life is only its final operation intermediary between Mind and Body. All that we say of Life must therefore be subject to the qualifications arising from this dependence. We do not really know Life whether in its nature or its process unless and until we are aware and grow conscious of that Conscious-Force working in it of which it is only the external aspect and instrumentation. Then only can we perceive and execute with knowledge, as individual soul-forms and mental and bodily instruments of the Divine, the will of God in Life; then only can Life and Mind proceed in paths and movements of an ever-increasing straightness of the truth in ourselves and things by a constant diminishing of the crooked perversions of the Ignorance. Just as Mind has to unite itself consciously with the Supermind from which it is separated by the action of Avidya, so Life has to become aware of the Conscious-Force which operates in it for ends and with a meaning of which the life in us, because it is absorbed in the mere process of living as our mind is absorbed in the mere process of mentalising life and matter, is unconscious in its darkened action so that it serves them blindly and ignorantly and not, as it must and will in its liberation and fulfilment, luminously or with a self-fulfilling knowledge, power and bliss.

In fact, our Life, because it is subservient to the darkened and dividing operation of Mind, is itself darkened and divided and undergoes all that subjection to death, limitation, weakness, suffering, ignorant functioning of which the bound and limited creature-Mind is the parent and cause. The original source of the perversion was, we have seen, the self-limitation of the individual soul bound to self-ignorance because it regards itself by an exclusive concentration as a separate self-existent indi-

viduality and regards all cosmic action only as it presents itself to its own individual consciousness, knowledge, will, force, enjoyment and limited being instead of seeing itself as a conscious form of the One and embracing all consciousness, all knowledge, all will, all force, all enjoyment and all being as one with its own. The universal life in us, obeying this direction of the soul imprisoned in mind, itself becomes imprisoned in an individual action. It exists and acts as a separate life with a limited insufficient capacity undergoing and not freely embracing the shock and pressure of all the cosmic life around it. Thrown into the constant cosmic interchange of Force in the universe as a poor, limited, individual existence, Life at first helplessly suffers and obeys the giant interplay with only a mechanical reaction upon all that attacks, devours, enjoys, uses, drives it. But as consciousness develops, as the light of its own being emerges from the inert darkness of the involutionary sleep, the individual existence becomes dimly aware of the power in it and seeks first nervously and then mentally to master, use and enjoy the play. This awakening to the Power in it is the gradual awakening to self. For Life is Force and Force is Power and Power is Will and Will is the working of the Master-Consciousness. Life in the individual becomes more and more aware in its depths that it too is the Will-Force of Sachchidananda which is master of the universe and it aspires itself to be individually master of its own world. To realise its own power and to master as well as to know its world is therefore the increasing impulse of all individual life; that impulse is an essential feature of the growing self-manifestation of the Divine in cosmic existence.

But though Life is Power and the growth of individual life means the growth of the individual Power, still the mere fact of its being a divided individualised life and force prevents it from really becoming master of its world. For that would mean to be master of the All-Force, and it is impossible for a divided and individualised consciousness with a divided, individualised and therefore limited power and will to be master of the All-Force; only the All-Will can be that and the individual only, if at all, by becoming again one with the All-Will and therefore with the All-Force. Otherwise, the individual life in the

individual form must be always subject to the three badges of its limitation, Death, Desire and Incapacity.

Death is imposed on the individual life both by the conditions of its own existence and by its relations to the All-Force which manifests itself in the universe. For the individual life is a particular play of energy specialised to constitute, maintain, energise and finally to dissolve when its utility is over, one of the myriad forms which all serve, each in its own place, time and scope, the whole play of the universe. The energy of life in the body has to support the attack of the energies external to it in the universe; it has to draw them in and feed upon them and is itself being constantly devoured by them. All Matter according to the Upanishad is food, and this is the formula of the material world that "the eater eating is himself eaten". The life organised in the body is constantly exposed to the possibility of being broken up by the attack of the life external to it or, its devouring capacity being insufficient or not properly served or there being no right balance between the capacity of devouring and the capacity or necessity of providing food for the life outside, it is unable to protect itself and is devoured or is unable to renew itself and therefore wasted away or broken; it has to go through the process of death for a new construction or renewal.

Not only so but, again in the language of the Upanishad, the life-force is the food of the body and the body the food of the life-force; in other words, the life-energy in us both supplies the material by which the form is built up and constantly maintained and renewed and is at the same time constantly using up the substantial form of itself which it thus creates and keeps in existence. If the balance between these two operations is imperfect or is disturbed or if the ordered play of the different currents of life-force is thrown out of gear, then disease and decay intervene and commence the process of disintegration. And the very struggle for conscious mastery and even the growth of mind make the maintenance of the life more difficult. For there is an increasing demand of the life-energy on the form, a demand which is in excess of the original system of supply and disturbs the original balance of supply and demand and, before a new balance can be established, many disorders are

introduced inimical to the harmony and to the length of maintenance of the life; in addition the attempt at mastery creates always a corresponding reaction in the environment which is full of forces that also desire fulfilment and are therefore intolerant of, revolt against and attack the existence which seeks to master them. There too a balance is disturbed, a more intense struggle is generated; however strong the mastering life, unless either it is unlimited or else succeeds in establishing a new harmony with its environment, it cannot always resist and triumph but must one day be overcome and disintegrated.

But, apart from all these necessities, there is the one fundamental necessity of the nature and object of embodied life itself, which is to seek infinite experience on a finite basis, and since the form, the basis by its very organisation limits the possibility of experience, this can only be done by dissolving it and seeking new forms. For the soul, having once limited itself by concentrating on the moment and the field, is driven to seek its infinity again by the principle of succession, by adding moment to moment and thus storing up a Time-experience which it calls its past; in that Time it moves through successive fields, successive experiences or lives, successive accumulations of knowledge, capacity, enjoyment, and all this it holds in subconscious or superconscious memory as its fund of past acquisition in Time. To this process change of form is essential, and for the soul involved in individual body change of form means dissolution of the body in subjection to the law and compulsion of the All-life in the material universe, to its law of supply of the material of form and demand on the material, its principle of constant intershock and the struggle of the embodied life to exist in a world of mutual devouring. And this is the law of Death.

This then is the necessity and justification of Death, not as a denial of Life, but as a process of Life; death is necessary because eternal change of form is the sole immortality to which the finite living substance can aspire and eternal change of experience the sole infinity to which the finite mind involved in living body can attain. This change of form cannot be allowed to remain merely a constant renewal of the same form-type such as constitutes our bodily life between birth and death; for unless

the form-type is changed and the experiencing mind is thrown into new forms in new circumstances of time, place and environment, the necessary variation of experience which the very nature of existence in Time and Space demands, cannot be effectuated. And it is only the process of Death by dissolution and by the devouring of life by Life, it is only the absence of freedom, the compulsion, the struggle, the pain, the subjection to something that appears to be Not-Self which makes this necessary and salutary change appear terrible and undesirable to our mortal mentality. It is the sense of being devoured, broken up, destroyed or forced away which is the sting of Death and which even the belief in personal survival of death cannot wholly abrogate.

But this process is a necessity of that mutual devouring which we see to be the initial law of Life in Matter. Life, says the Upanishad, is Hunger which is Death, and by this Hunger which is Death, *aśanāyāmṛtyuḥ*, the material world has been created. For Life here assumes as its mould material substance, and material substance is Being infinitely divided and seeking infinitely to aggregate itself; between these two impulses of infinite division and infinite aggregation the material existence of the universe is constituted. The attempt of the individual, the living atom, to maintain and aggrandise itself is the whole sense of Desire; a physical, vital, moral, mental increase by a more and more all-embracing experience, a more and more all-embracing possession, absorption, assimilation, enjoyment is the inevitable, fundamental, ineradicable impulse of Existence, once divided and individualised, yet ever secretly conscious of its all-embracing, all-possessing infinity. The impulse to realise that secret consciousness is the spur of the cosmic Divine, the lust of the embodied Self within every individual creature; and it is inevitable, just, salutary that it should seek to realise it first in the terms of life by an increasing growth and expansion. In the physical world this can only be done by feeding on the environment, by aggrandising oneself through the absorption of others or of what is possessed by others; and this necessity is the universal justification of Hunger in all its forms. Still what devours must also be devoured; for the law of interchange, of action and reaction, of limited capacity and therefore of a final

exhaustion and succumbing governs all life in the physical world.

In the conscious mind that which was still only a vital hunger in subconscious life, transforms itself into higher forms; hunger in the vital parts becomes craving of Desire in the mentalised life, straining of Will in the intellectual or thinking life. This movement of desire must and ought to continue until the individual has grown sufficiently so that he can now at last become master of himself and by increasing union with the Infinite possessor of this universe. Desire is the lever by which the divine Life-principle effects its end of self-affirmation in the universe and the attempt to extinguish it in the interests of inertia is a denial of the divine Life-principle, a Will-not-to-be which is necessarily ignorance; for one cannot cease to be individually except by being infinitely. Desire too can only cease rightly by becoming the desire of the infinite and satisfying itself with a supernal fulfilment and an infinite satisfaction in the all-possessing bliss of the Infinite. Meanwhile it has to progress from the type of a mutually devouring hunger to the type of a mutual giving, of an increasingly joyous sacrifice of interchange; — the individual gives himself to other individuals and receives them back in exchange; the lower gives itself to the higher and the higher to the lower so that they may be fulfilled in each other; the human gives itself to the Divine and the Divine to the human; the All in the individual gives itself to the All in the universe and receives its realised universality as a divine recompense. Thus the law of Hunger must give place progressively to the law of Love, the law of Division to the law of Unity, the law of Death to the law of Immortality. Such is the necessity, such the justification, such the culmination and self-fulfilment of the Desire that is at work in the universe.

As this mask of Death which Life assumes results from the movement of the finite seeking to affirm its immortality, so Desire is the impulse of the Force of Being individualised in Life to affirm progressively in the terms of succession in Time and of self-extension in Space, in the framework of the finite, its infinite Bliss, the Ananda of Sachchidananda. The mask of Desire which that impulse assumes comes directly from the third phenomenon of Life, its law of incapacity. Life is an infinite Force working

in the terms of the finite; inevitably, throughout its overt individualised action in the finite its omnipotence must appear and act as a limited capacity and a partial impotence, although behind every act of the individual, however weak, however futile, however stumbling, there must be the whole superconscious and subconscious presence of infinite omnipotent Force; without that presence behind it no least single movement in the cosmos can happen; into its sum of universal action each single act and movement falls by the fiat of the omnipotent omniscience which works as the Supermind inherent in things. But the individualised life-force is to its own consciousness limited and full of incapacity; for it has to work not only against the mass of other environing individualised life-forces, but also subject to control and denial by the infinite Life itself with whose total will and trend its own will and trend may not immediately agree. Therefore limitation of force, phenomenon of incapacity is the third of the three characteristics of individualised and divided Life. On the other hand, the impulse of self-enlargement and all-possession remains and it does not and is not meant to measure or limit itself by the limit of its present force or capacity. Hence from the gulf between the impulse to possess and the force of possession desire arises; for if there were no such discrepancy, if the force could always take possession of its object, always attain securely its end, desire would not come into existence but only a calm and self-possessed Will without craving such as is the Will of the Divine.

If the individualised force were the energy of a mind free from ignorance, no such limitation, no such necessity of desire would intervene. For a mind not separated from Supermind, a mind of divine knowledge would know the intention, scope and inevitable result of its every act and would not crave or struggle but put forth an assured force self-limited to the immediate object in view. It would, even in stretching beyond the present, even in undertaking movements not intended to succeed immediately, yet not be subject to desire or limitation. For the failures also of the Divine are acts of its omniscient omnipotence which knows the right time and circumstance for the incipience, the vicissitudes, the immediate and the final results of all its cosmic

undertakings. The mind of knowledge, being in unison with the divine Supermind, would participate in this omniscience and this all-determining power. But, as we have seen, individualised life-force here is an energy of individualising and ignorant Mind, Mind that has fallen from the knowledge of its own Supermind. Therefore incapacity is necessary to its relations in Life and inevitable in the nature of things; for the practical omnipotence of an ignorant force even in a limited sphere is unthinkable, since in that sphere such a force would set itself against the working of the divine and omniscient omnipotence and unfix the fixed purpose of things, — an impossible cosmic situation. The struggle of limited forces increasing their capacity by that struggle under the driving impetus of instinctive or conscious desire is therefore the first law of Life. As with desire, so with this strife; it must rise into a mutually helpful trial of strength, a conscious wrestling of brother forces in which the victor and vanquished or rather that which influences by action from above and that which influences by retort of action from below must equally gain and increase. And this again has eventually to become the happy shock of divine interchange, the strenuous clasp of Love replacing the convulsive clasp of strife. Still, strife is the necessary and salutary beginning. Death, Desire and Strife are the trinity of divided living, the triple mask of the divine Life-principle in its first essay of cosmic self-affirmation.

CHAPTER XXI

The Ascent of Life

> Let the path of the Word lead to the godheads, towards the Waters by the working of the Mind....[1] O Flame, thou goest to the ocean of Heaven, towards the gods; thou makest to meet together the godheads of the planes, the waters that are in the realm of light above the sun and the waters that abide below.[2]
>
> The Lord of Delight conquers the third status; he maintains and governs according to the Soul of universality; like a hawk, a kite he settles on the vessel and uplifts it, a finder of the Light he manifests the fourth status and cleaves to the ocean that is the billowing of those waters.[3]
>
> Thrice Vishnu paced and set his step uplifted out of the primal dust; three steps he has paced, the Guardian, the Invincible, and from beyond he upholds their laws. Scan the workings of Vishnu and see from whence he has manifested their laws. That is his highest pace which is seen ever by the seers like an eye extended in heaven; that the illumined, the awakened kindle into a blaze, even Vishnu's step supreme....[4]
>
> *Rig Veda.*

WE HAVE seen that as the divided mortal Mind, parent of limitation and ignorance and the dualities, is only a dark figure of the Supermind, of the self-luminous divine Consciousness in its first dealings with the apparent negation of itself from which our cosmos commences, so also Life as it emerges in our material universe, an energy of the dividing Mind subconscious, submerged, imprisoned in Matter, Life as the parent of death, hunger and incapacity, is only a dark figure of the divine superconscient Force whose highest terms are immortality, satisfied delight and omnipotence. This relation fixes the nature of that great cosmic processus of which we are a part; it determines the first, the middle and the ultimate terms of our evolution. The first terms of Life are division, a force-driven subconscient will, apparent not as will but as dumb urge of physical energy, and the impotence of an inert subjection to the mechanical forces that govern the interchange between the form and its environment. This inconscience and this blind but potent action of Energy are the type of the material universe as the physical scientist sees it

[1] X. 30. 1. [2] III. 22. 3. [3] IX. 96. 18, 19. [4] I. 22. 17-21.

and this his view of things extends and turns into the whole of basic existence; it is the consciousness of Matter and the accomplished type of material living. But there comes a new equipoise, there intervenes a new set of terms which increase in proportion as Life delivers itself out of this form and begins to evolve towards conscious Mind; for the middle terms of Life are death and mutual devouring, hunger and conscious desire, the sense of a limited room and capacity and the struggle to increase, to expand, to conquer and to possess. These three terms are the basis of that status of evolution which the Darwinian theory first made plain to human knowledge. For the phenomenon of death involves in itself a struggle to survive, since death is only the negative term in which Life hides from itself and tempts its own positive being to seek for immortality. The phenomenon of hunger and desire involves a struggle towards a status of satisfaction and security, since desire is only the stimulus by which Life tempts its own positive being to rise out of the negation of unfulfilled hunger towards the full possession of the delight of existence. The phenomenon of limited capacity involves a struggle towards expansion, mastery and possession, the possession of the self and the conquest of the environment, since limitation and defect are only the negation by which Life tempts its own positive being to seek for the perfection of which it is eternally capable. The struggle for life is not only a struggle to survive, it is also a struggle for possession and perfection, since only by taking hold of the environment whether more or less, whether by self-adaptation to it or by adapting it to oneself either by accepting and conciliating it or by conquering and changing it, can survival be secured, and equally is it true that only a greater and greater perfection can assure a continuous permanence, a lasting survival. It is this truth that Darwinism sought to express in the formula of the survival of the fittest.

But as the scientific mind sought to extend to Life the mechanical principle proper to the existence and concealed mechanical consciousness in Matter, not seeing that a new principle has entered whose very reason of being is to subject to itself the mechanical, so the Darwinian formula was used to extend too largely the aggressive principle of Life, the vital selfishness of the

individual, the instinct and process of self-preservation, self-assertion and aggressive living. For these two first states of Life contain in themselves the seeds of a new principle and another state which must increase in proportion as Mind evolves out of matter through the vital formula into its own law. And still more must all things change when as Life evolves upward towards Mind, so Mind evolves upward towards Supermind and Spirit. Precisely because the struggle for survival, the impulse towards permanence is contradicted by the law of death, the individual life is compelled, and used, to secure permanence rather for its species than for itself; but this it cannot do without the co-operation of others; and the principle of co-operation and mutual help, the desire of others, the desire of the wife, the child, the friend and helper, the associated group, the practice of association, of conscious joining and interchange are the seeds out of which flowers the principle of love. Let us grant that at first love may only be an extended selfishness and that this aspect of extended selfishness may persist and dominate, as it does still persist and dominate, in higher stages of the evolution: still as mind evolves and more and more finds itself, it comes by the experience of life and love and mutual help to perceive that the natural individual is a minor term of being and exists by the universal. Once this is discovered, as it is inevitably discovered by man the mental being, his destiny is determined; for he has reached the point at which Mind can begin to open to the truth that there is something beyond itself; from that moment his evolution, however obscure and slow, towards that superior something, towards Spirit, towards Supermind, towards Supermanhood is inevitably predetermined.

Therefore Life is predestined by its own nature to a third status, a third set of terms of its self-expression. If we examine this ascent of Life we shall see that the last terms of its actual evolution, the terms of that which we have called its third status, must necessarily be in appearance the very contradiction and opposite but in fact the very fulfilment and transfiguration of its first conditions. Life starts with the extreme divisions and rigid forms of Matter, and of this rigid division the atom, which is the basis of all material form, is the very type. The atom stands apart

from all others even in its union with them, rejects death and dissolution under any ordinary force and is the physical type of the separate ego defining its existence against the principle of fusion in Nature. But unity is as strong a principle in Nature as division; it is indeed the master principle of which division is only a subordinate term, and to the principle of unity every divided form must therefore subordinate itself in one fashion or another by mechanical necessity, by compulsion, by assent or inducement. Therefore, if Nature for her own ends, in order principally to have a firm basis for her combinations and a fixed seed of forms, allows the atom ordinarily to resist the process of fusion by dissolution, she compels it to subserve the process of fusion by aggregation; the atom, as it is the first aggregate, is also the first basis of aggregate unities.

When Life reaches its second status, that which we recognise as vitality, the contrary phenomenon takes the lead and the physical basis of the vital ego is obliged to consent to dissolution. Its constituents are broken up so that the elements of one life can be used to enter into the elemental formation of other lives. The extent to which this law reigns in Nature has not yet been fully recognised and indeed cannot be until we have a science of mental life and spiritual existence as sound as our present science of physical life and the existence of Matter. Still we can see broadly that not only the elements of our physical body, but those of our subtler vital being, our life-energy, our desire-energy, our powers, strivings, passions enter both during our life and after our death into the life-existence of others. An ancient occult knowledge tells us that we have a vital frame as well as a physical and this too is after death dissolved and lends itself to the constitution of other vital bodies; our life energies while we live are continually mixing with the energies of other beings. A similar law governs the mutual relations of our mental life with the mental life of other thinking creatures. There is a constant dissolution and dispersion and a reconstruction effected by the shock of mind upon mind with a constant interchange and fusion of elements. Interchange, intermixture and fusion of being with being, is the very process of life, a law of its existence.

We have then two principles in Life, the necessity or the will of the separate ego to survive in its distinctness and guard its identity and the compulsion imposed upon it by Nature to fuse itself with others. In the physical world she lays much stress on the former impulse; for she needs to create stable separate forms, since it is her first and really her most difficult problem to create and maintain any such thing as a separative survival of individuality and a stable form for it in the incessant flux and motion of Energy and in the unity of the infinite. In the atomic life therefore the individual form persists as the basis and secures by its aggregation with others the more or less prolonged existence of aggregate forms which shall be the basis of vital and mental individualisations. But as soon as Nature has secured a sufficient firmness in this respect for the safe conduct of her ulterior operations, she reverses the process; the individual form perishes and the aggregate life profits by the elements of the form that is thus dissolved. This, however, cannot be the last stage; that can only be reached when the two principles are harmonised, when the individual is able to persist in the consciousness of his individuality and yet fuse himself with others without disturbance of preservative equilibrium and interruption of survival.

The terms of the problem presuppose the full emergence of Mind; for in vitality without conscious mind there can be no equation, but only a temporary unstable equilibrium ending in the death of the body, the dissolution of the individual and the dispersal of its elements into the universality. The nature of physical Life forbids the idea of an individual form possessing the same inherent power of persistence and therefore of continued individual existence as the atoms of which it is composed. Only a mental being, supported by the psychic nodus within which expresses or begins to express the secret soul, can hope to persist by his power of linking on the past to the future in a stream of continuity which the breaking of the form may break in the physical memory but need not destroy in the mental being itself and which may even by an eventual development bridge over the gap of physical memory created by death and birth of the body. Even as it is, even in the present imperfect development of embodied mind, the mental being is conscious in the mass of a

past and a future extending beyond the life of the body; he becomes aware of an individual past, of individual lives that have created his and of which he is a development and modified reproduction and of future individual lives which his is creating out of itself; he is conscious also of an aggregate life past and future through which his own continuity runs as one of its fibres. This which is evident to physical Science in the terms of heredity, becomes otherwise evident to the developing soul behind the mental being in the terms of persistent personality. The mental being expressive of this soul-consciousness is therefore the nodus of the persistent individual and the persistent aggregate life; in him their union and harmony become possible.

Association with love as its secret principle and its emergent summit is the type, the power of this new relation and therefore the governing principle of the development into the third status of life. The conscious preservation of individuality along with the consciously accepted necessity and desire of interchange, self-giving and fusion with other individuals, is necessary for the working of the principle of love; for if either is abolished, the working of love ceases, whatever may take its place. Fulfilment of love by entire self-immolation, even with an illusion of self-annihilation, is indeed an idea and an impulse in the mental being, but it points to a development beyond this third status of Life. This third status is a condition in which we rise progressively beyond the struggle for life by mutual devouring and the survival of the fittest by that struggle; for there is more and more a survival by mutual help and a self-perfectioning by mutual adaptation, interchange and fusion. Life is a self-affirmation of being, even a development and survival of ego, but of a being that has need of other beings, an ego that seeks to meet and include other egos and to be included in their life. The individuals and the aggregates who develop most the law of association and the law of love, of common help, kindliness, affection, comradeship, unity, who harmonise most successfully survival and mutual self-giving, the aggregate increasing the individual and the individual the aggregate, as well as individual increasing individual and aggregate aggregate by mutual interchange, will be the fittest for survival in this tertiary status of the evolution.

This development is significant of the increasing predominance of Mind[1] which progressively imposes its own law more and more upon the material existence. For mind by its greater subtlety does not need to devour in order to assimilate, possess and grow; rather the more it gives, the more it receives and grows; and the more it fuses itself into others, the more it fuses others into itself and increases the scope of its being. Physical life exhausts itself by too much giving and ruins itself by too much devouring; but though Mind in proportion as it leans on the law of Matter suffers the same limitation, yet, on the other hand, in proportion as it grows into its own law it tends to overcome this limitation, and in proportion as it overcomes the material limitation giving and receiving become one. For in its upward ascent it grows towards the rule of conscious unity in differentiation which is the divine law of the manifest Sachchidananda.

The second term of the original status of life is subconscious will which in the secondary status becomes hunger and conscious desire, — hunger and desire, the first seed of conscious mind. The growth into the third status of life by the principle of association, the growth of love, does not abolish the law of desire, but rather transforms and fulfils it. Love is in its nature the desire to give oneself to others and to receive others in exchange; it is a commerce between being and being. Physical life does not desire to give itself, it desires only to receive. It is true that it is compelled to give itself, for the life which only receives and does not give must become barren, wither and perish, — if indeed such life in its entirety is possible at all here or in any world; but it is compelled, not willing, it obeys the subconscious impulse of Nature rather than consciously shares in it. Even when love intervenes, the self-giving at first still preserves to a large extent the mechanical character of the subconscious will in the atom. Love itself at first obeys the law of hunger and enjoys the re-

[1] What is spoken of here is mind as it acts directly in life, in the vital being, through the heart. Love — the relative principle, not its absolute — is a principle of life, not of mind, but it can possess itself and move towards permanence only when taken up by the mind into its own light. What is called love in the body and the vital parts is mostly a form of hunger without permanence.

ceiving and the exacting from others rather than the giving and surrendering to others which it admits chiefly as a necessary price for the thing that it desires. But here it has not yet attained to its true nature; its true law is to establish an equal commerce in which the joy of giving is equal to the joy of receiving and tends in the end to become even greater; but that is when it is shooting beyond itself under the pressure of the psychic flame to attain to the fulfilment of utter unity and has therefore to realise that which seemed to it not-self as an even greater and dearer self than its own individuality. In its life-origin, the law of love is the impulse to realise and fulfil oneself in others and by others, to be enriched by enriching, to possess and be possessed because without being possessed one does not possess oneself utterly.

The inert incapacity of atomic existence to possess itself, the subjection of the material individual to the not-self belongs to the first status of life. The consciousness of limitation and the struggle to possess, to master both self and the not-self is the type of the secondary status. Here, too, the development to the third status brings a transformation of the original terms into a fulfilment and a harmony which repeat the terms while seeming to contradict them. There comes about through association and through love a recognition of the not-self as a greater self and therefore a consciously accepted submission to its law and need which fulfils the increasing impulse of aggregate life to absorb the individual; and there is a possession again by the individual of the life of others as his own and of all that it has to give him as his own which fulfils the opposite impulse of individual possession. Nor can this relation of mutuality between the individual and the world he lives in be expressed or complete or secure unless the same relation is established between individual and individual and between aggregate and aggregate. All the difficult effort of man towards the harmonisation of self-affirmation and freedom, by which he possesses himself, with association and love, fraternity, comradeship, in which he gives himself to others, his ideals of harmonious equilibrium, justice, mutuality, equality by which he creates a balance of the two opposites, are really an attempt inevitably predetermined in its lines to solve the original problem of Nature, the very problem of Life

itself, by the resolution of the conflict between the two opposites which present themselves in the very foundations of Life in Matter. The resolution is attempted by the higher principle of Mind which alone can find the road towards the harmony intended, even though the harmony itself can only be found in a Power still beyond us.

For, if the data with which we have started are correct, the end of the road, the goal itself can only be reached by Mind passing beyond itself into that which is beyond Mind, since of That the Mind is only an inferior term and an instrument first for descent into form and individuality and secondly for reascension into that reality which the form embodies and the individuality represents. Therefore the perfect solution of the problem of Life is not likely to be realised by association, interchange and accommodations of love alone or through the law of the mind and the heart alone. It must come by a fourth status of life in which the eternal unity of the many is realised through the spirit and the conscious foundation of all the operations of life is laid no longer in the divisions of body, nor in the passions and hungers of the vitality, nor in the groupings and the imperfect harmonies of the mind, nor in a combination of all these, but in the unity and freedom of the Spirit.

CHAPTER XXII

The Problem of Life

> This it is that is called the universal Life.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[1]

> The Lord is seated in the heart of all beings turning all beings mounted upon a machine by his Maya.
>
> *Gita.*[2]

> He who knows the Truth, the Knowledge, the Infinity that is Brahman shall enjoy with the all-wise Brahman all objects of desire.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[3]

LIFE is, we have seen, the putting forth, under certain cosmic circumstances, of a Conscious-Force which is in its own nature infinite, absolute, untrammelled, inalienably possessed of its own unity and bliss, the Conscious-Force of Sachchidananda. The central circumstance of this cosmic process, in so far as it differs in its appearances from the purity of the infinite Existence and the self-possession of the undivided Energy, is the dividing faculty of the Mind obscured by ignorance. There results from this divided action of an undivided Force the apparition of dualities, oppositions, seeming denials of the nature of Sachchidananda which exist as an abiding reality for the mind, but only as a phenomenon misrepresenting a manifold Reality for the divine cosmic Consciousness concealed behind the veil of mind. Hence the world takes on the appearance of a clash of opposing truths each seeking to fulfil itself, each having the right to fulfilment, and therefore of a mass of problems and mysteries which have to be solved because behind all this confusion there is the hidden Truth and unity pressing for the solution and by the solution for its own unveiled manifestation in the world.

This solution has to be sought by the mind, but not by the mind alone; it has to be a solution in Life, in act of being as well as in consciousness of being. Consciousness as Force has created the world-movement and its problems; consciousness as Force has to solve the problems it has created and carry the world-

[1] II. 3. [2] XVIII. 61. [3] II. 1.

movement to the inevitable fulfilment of its secret sense and evolving Truth. But this Life has taken successively three appearances. The first is material, — a submerged consciousness is concealed in its own superficial expressive action and representative forms of force; for the consciousness itself disappears from view in the act and is lost in the form. The second is vital, — an emerging consciousness is half-apparent as power of life and process of the growth, activity and decay of form, it is half-delivered out of its original imprisonment, it has become vibrant in power, as vital craving and satisfaction or repulsion, but at first not at all and then only imperfectly vibrant in light as knowledge of its own self-existence and its environment. The third is mental, — an emerged consciousness reflects fact of life as mental sense and responsive perception and idea while as new idea it tries to become fact of life, modifies the internal and attempts to modify conformably the external existence of the being. Here, in mind, consciousness is delivered out of its imprisonment in the act and form of its own force; but it is not yet master of the act and form because it has emerged as an individual consciousness and is aware therefore only of a fragmentary movement of its own total activities.

The whole crux and difficulty of human life lies here. Man is this mental being, this mental consciousness working as mental force, aware in a way of the universal force and life of which he is part but, because he has not knowledge of its universality or even of the totality of his own being, unable to deal either with life in general or with his own life in a really effective and victorious movement of mastery. He seeks to know Matter in order to be master of the material environment, to know Life in order to be master of the vital existence, to know Mind in order to be master of the great obscure movement of mentality in which he is not only a jet of light of self-consciousness like the animal, but also more and more a flame of growing knowledge. Thus he seeks to know himself in order to be master of himself, to know the world in order to be master of the world. This is the urge of Existence in him, the necessity of the Consciousness he is, the impulsion of the Force that is his life, the secret will of Sachchidananḍa appearing as the individual in a world in which He

expresses and yet seems to deny Himself. To find the conditions under which this inner impulsion is satisfied is the problem man must strive always to resolve and to that he is compelled by the very nature of his own existence and by the Deity seated within him; and until the problem is solved, the impulse satisfied, the human race cannot rest from its labour. Either man must fulfil himself by satisfying the Divine within him or he must produce out of himself a new and greater being who will be more capable of satisfying it. He must either himself become a divine humanity or give place to Superman.

This results from the very logic of things because, the mental consciousness of man not being the completely illumined consciousness entirely emerged out of the obscuration of Matter but only a progressive term in the great emergence, the line of evolutionary creation in which he has appeared cannot stop where he now is, but must go either beyond its present term in him or else beyond him if he himself has not the force to go forward. Mental idea trying to become fact of life must pass on till it becomes the whole Truth of existence delivering itself out of its successive wrappings, revealed and progressively fulfilled in light of consciousness and joyously fulfilled in power; for in and through these two terms of power and light Existence manifests itself, because existence is in its nature Consciousness and Force: but the third term in which these, its two constituents, meet, become one and are ultimately fulfilled, is satisfied Delight of self-existence. For an evolving life like ours this inevitable culmination must necessarily mean the finding of the self that was contained in the seed of its own birth and, with that self-finding, the complete working out of the potentialities deposited in the movement of Conscious-Force from which this life took its rise. The potentiality thus contained in our human existence is Sachchidananda realising Himself in a certain harmony and unification of the individual life and the universal so that mankind shall express in a common consciousness, common movement of power, common delight the transcendent Something which has cast itself into this form of things.

All life depends for its nature on the fundamental poise of its own constituting consciousness; for as the Consciousness is,

so will the Force be. Where the Consciousness is infinite, one, transcendent of its acts and forms even while embracing and informing, organising and executing them, as is the consciousness of Sachchidananda, so will be the Force, infinite in its scope, one in its works, transcendent in its power and self-knowledge. Where the Consciousness is like that of material Nature, submerged, self-oblivious, driving along in the drift of its own Force without seeming to know it, even though by the very nature of the eternal relation between the two terms it really determines the drift which drives it, so will be the Force: it will be a monstrous movement of the Inert and Inconscient, unaware of what it contains, seeming mechanically to fulfil itself by a sort of inexorable accident, an inevitably happy chance, even while all the while it really obeys faultlessly the law of the Right and Truth fixed for it by the will of the supernal Conscious-Being concealed within its movement. Where the Consciousness is divided in itself, as in Mind, limiting itself in various centres, setting each to fulfil itself without knowledge of what is in other centres and of its relation to others, aware of things and forces in their apparent division and opposition to each other but not in their real unity, such will be the Force: it will be a life like that we are and see around us; it will be a clash and intertwining of individual lives seeking each its own fulfilment without knowing its relation to others, a conflict and difficult accommodation of divided and opposing or differing forces and, in the mentality, a mixing, a shock and wrestle and insecure combination of divided and opposing or divergent ideas which cannot arrive at the knowledge of their necessity to each other or grasp their place as elements of that Unity behind which is expressing itself through them and in which their discords must cease. But where the Consciousness is in possession of both the diversity and the unity and the latter contains and governs the former, where it is aware at once of the Law, Truth and Right of the All and the Law, Truth and Right of the individual and the two become consciously harmonised in a mutual unity, where the whole nature of the consciousness is the One knowing itself as the Many and the Many knowing themselves as the One, there the Force also will be of the same nature: it will be a Life that consciously obeys

the law of Unity and yet fulfils each thing in the diversity according to its proper rule and function; it will be a life in which all the individuals live at once in themselves and in each other as one conscious Being in many souls, one power of Consciousness in many minds, one joy of Force working in many lives, one reality of Delight fulfilling itself in many hearts and bodies.

The first of these four positions, the source of all this progressive relation between Consciousness and Force, is their poise in the being of Sachchidananda where they are one; for there the Force is consciousness of being working itself out without ever ceasing to be consciousness and the Consciousness is similarly luminous Force of being eternally aware of itself and of its own Delight and never ceasing to be this power of utter light and self-possession. The second relation is that of material Nature; it is the poise of being in the material universe which is the great denial of Sachchidananda by Himself: for here there is the utter apparent separation of Force from Consciousness, the specious miracle of the all-governing and infallible Inconscient which is only the mask but which modern knowledge has mistaken for the real face of the cosmic Deity. The third relation is the poise of being in Mind and in the Life which we see emerging out of this denial, bewildered by it, struggling — without any possibility of cessation by submission, but also without any clear knowledge or instinct of a victorious solution — against the thousand and one problems involved in this perplexing apparition of man the half-potent conscient being out of the omnipotent Inconscience of the material universe. The fourth relation is the poise of being in Supermind: it is the fulfilled existence which will eventually solve all this complex problem created by the partial affirmation emerging out of the total denial; and it must needs solve it in the only possible way, by the complete affirmation fulfilling all that was secretly there contained in potentiality and intended in fact of evolution behind the mask of the great denial. That is the real life of the real Man towards which this partial life and partial unfulfilled manhood is striving forward with a perfect knowledge and guidance in the so-called Inconscient within us, but in our conscient parts with only a dim and struggling prevision, with fragments of realisation, with glimpses of the ideal, with flashes

of revelation and inspiration in the poet and the prophet, the seer and the transcendentalist, the mystic and the thinker, the great intellects and the great souls of humanity.

From the data we have now before us we can see that the difficulties which arise from the imperfect poise of Consciousness and Force in man in his present status of mind and life are principally three. First, he is aware only of a small part of his own being: his surface mentality, his surface life, his surface physical being is all that he knows and he does not know even all of that; below is the occult surge of his subconscious and his subliminal mind, his subconscious and his subliminal life-impulses, his subconscious corporeality, all that large part of himself which he does not know and cannot govern, but which rather knows and governs him. For, existence and consciousness and force being one, we can only have some real power over so much of our existence as we are identified with by self-awareness; the rest must be governed by its own consciousness which is subliminal to our surface mind and life and body. And yet, the two being one movement and not two separate movements, the larger and more potent part of ourselves must govern and determine in the mass the smaller and less powerful; therefore we are governed by the subconscient and subliminal even in our conscious existence and in our very self-mastery and self-direction we are only instruments of what seems to us the Inconscient within us.

This is what the old wisdom meant when it said that man imagines himself to be the doer of the work by his free will, but in reality Nature determines all his works and even the wise are compelled to follow their own Nature. But since Nature is the creative force of consciousness of the Being within us who is masked by His own inverse movement and apparent denial of Himself, they called that inverse creative movement of His consciousness the Maya or Illusion-power of the Lord and said that all existences are turned as upon a machine through His Maya by the Lord seated within the heart of all existences. It is evident then that only by man so far exceeding mind as to become one in self-awareness with the Lord can he become master of his own being. And since this is not possible in the inconscience or in the subconscient itself, since profit cannot come by plunging down

into our depths back towards the Inconscient, it can only be by going inward where the Lord is seated and by ascending into that which is still superconscient to us, into the Supermind, that this unity can be wholly established. For there in the higher and divine Maya is the conscious knowledge, in its law and truth, of that which works in the subconscient by the lower Maya under the conditions of the Denial which seeks to become the Affirmation. For this lower Nature works out what is willed and known in that higher Nature. The Illusion-Power of the divine knowledge in the world which creates appearances is governed by the Truth-Power of the same knowledge which knows the truth behind the appearances and keeps ready for us the Affirmation towards which they are working. The partial and apparent Man here will find there the perfect and real Man capable of an entirely self-aware being by his full unity with that Self-existent who is the omniscient lord of His own cosmic evolution and procession.

The second difficulty is that man is separated in his mind, his life, his body from the universal and therefore, even as he does not know himself, is equally and even more incapable of knowing his fellow-creatures. He forms by inferences, theories, observations and a certain imperfect capacity of sympathy a rough mental construction about them; but this is not knowledge. Knowledge can only come by conscious identity, for that is the only true knowledge, — existence aware of itself. We know what we are so far as we are consciously aware of ourself, the rest is hidden; so also we can come really to know that with which we become one in our consciousness, but only so far as we can become one with it. If the means of knowledge are indirect and imperfect, the knowledge attained will also be indirect and imperfect. It will enable us to work out with a certain precarious clumsiness but still perfectly enough from our mental standpoint certain limited practical aims, necessities, conveniences, a certain imperfect and insecure harmony of our relations with that which we know; but only by a conscious unity with it can we arrive at a perfect relation. Therefore we must arrive at a conscious unity with our fellow-beings and not merely at the sympathy created by love or the understanding created by mental knowledge, which will always be the knowledge of their super-

ficial existence and therefore imperfect in itself and subject to denial and frustration by the uprush of the unknown and unmastered from the subconscient or the subliminal in them and us. But this conscious oneness can only be established by entering into that in which we are one with them, the universal; and the fullness of the universal exists consciently only in that which is superconscient to us, in the Supermind: for here in our normal being the greater part of it is subconscient and therefore in this normal poise of mind, life and body it cannot be possessed. The lower conscious nature is bound down to ego in all its activities, chained triply to the stake of differentiated individuality. The Supermind alone commands unity in diversity.

The third difficulty is the division between force and consciousness in the evolutionary existence. There is, first, the division which has been created by the evolution itself in its three successive formations of Matter, Life and Mind, each with its own law of working. The Life is at war with the body; it attempts to force it to satisfy life's desires, impulses, satisfactions and demands from its limited capacity what could only be possible to an immortal and divine body; and the body, enslaved and tyrannised over, suffers and is in constant dumb revolt against the demands made upon it by the Life. The Mind is at war with both: sometimes it helps the Life against the Body, sometimes restrains the vital urge and seeks to protect the corporeal frame from life's desires, passions and over-driving energies; it also seeks to possess the Life and turn its energy to the mind's own ends, to the utmost joys of the mind's own activity, to the satisfaction of mental, aesthetic, emotional aims and their fulfilment in human existence; and the Life too finds itself enslaved and misused and is in frequent insurrection against the ignorant half-wise tyrant seated above it. This is the war of our members which the mind cannot satisfactorily resolve because it has to deal with a problem insoluble to it, the aspiration of an immortal being in a mortal life and body. It can only arrive at a long succession of compromises or end in an abandonment of the problem either by submission with the materialist to the mortality of our apparent being or with the ascetic and the religionist by the rejection and condemnation of the earthly life and withdrawal

to happier and easier fields of existence. But the true solution lies in finding the principle beyond Mind of which Immortality is the law and in conquering by it the mortality of our existence.

But there is also that fundamental division within between force of Nature and the conscious being which is the original cause of this incapacity. Not only is there a division between the mental, the vital and the physical being, but each of them is also divided against itself. The capacity of the body is less than the capacity of the instinctive soul or conscious being, the physical Purusha within it, the capacity of the vital force less than the capacity of the impulsive soul, the vital conscious being or Purusha within it, the capacity of the mental energy less than the capacity of the intellectual and emotional soul, the mental Purusha within it. For the soul is the inner consciousness which aspires to its own complete self-realisation and therefore always exceeds the individual formation of the moment, and the Force which has taken its poise in the formation is always pushed by its soul to that which is abnormal to the poise, transcendent of it; thus constantly pushed it has much trouble in answering, more in evolving from the present to a greater capacity. In trying to fulfil the demands of this triple soul it is distracted and driven to set instinct against instinct, impulse against impulse, emotion against emotion, idea against idea, satisfying this, denying that, then repenting and returning on what it has done, adjusting, compensating, readjusting *ad infinitum*, but not arriving at any principle of unity. And in the mind again the conscious-power that should harmonise and unite is not only limited in its knowledge and in its will, but the knowledge and the will are disparate and often at discord. The principle of unity is above in the Supermind: for there alone is the conscious unity of all diversities; there alone will and knowledge are equal and in perfect harmony; there alone Consciousness and Force arrive at their divine equation.

Man, in proportion as he develops into a self-conscious and truly thinking being, becomes acutely aware of all this discord and disparateness in his parts and he seeks to arrive at a harmony of his mind, life and body, a harmony of his knowledge and will and emotion, a harmony of all his members. Sometimes

this desire stops short at the attainment of a workable compromise which will bring with it a relative peace; but compromise can only be a halt on the way, since the Deity within will not be satisfied eventually with less than a perfect harmony combining in itself the integral development of our many-sided potentialities. Less than this would be an evasion of the problem, not its solution, or else only a temporary solution provided as a resting-place for the soul in its continual self-enlargement and ascension. Such a perfect harmony would demand as essential terms a perfect mentality, a perfect play of vital force, a perfect physical existence. But where in the radically imperfect shall we find the principle and power of perfection? Mind rooted in division and limitation cannot provide it to us nor can life and the body which are the energy and the frame of dividing and limiting mind. The principle and power of perfection are there in the subconscient but wrapped up in the tegument or veil of the lower Maya, a mute premonition emerging as an unrealised ideal; in the superconscient they await open, eternally realised, but still separated from us by the veil of our self-ignorance. It is above, then, and not either in our present poise nor below it that we must seek for the reconciling power and knowledge.

Equally, man, as he develops, becomes acutely aware of the discord and ignorance that governs his relations with the world, acutely intolerant of it, more and more set upon finding a principle of harmony, peace, joy and unity. This too can only come to him from above. For only by developing a mind which shall have knowledge of the mind of others as of itself, free from our mutual ignorance and misunderstanding, a will that feels and makes itself one with the will of others, an emotional heart that contains the emotions of others as its own, a life-force that senses the energies of others and accepts them for its own and seeks to fulfil them as its own, and a body that is not a wall of imprisonment and defence against the world, but all this under the law of a Light and Truth that shall transcend the aberrations and errors, the much sin and falsehood of our and others' minds, wills, emotions, life-energies, — only so can the life of man spiritually and practically become one with that of his fellow-beings and the individual recover his own universal self. The

subconscient has this life of the All and the superconscient has it, but under conditions which necessitate our motion upwards. For not towards the Godhead concealed in the "inconscient ocean where darkness is wrapped within darkness"[1], but towards the Godhead seated in the sea of eternal light[2], in the highest ether of our being, is the original impetus which has carried upward the evolving soul to the type of our humanity.

Unless therefore the race is to fall by the wayside and leave the victory to other and new creations of the eager travailing Mother, it must aspire to this ascent, conducted indeed through love, mental illumination and the vital urge to possession and self-giving, but leading beyond to the supramental unity which transcends and fulfils them; in the founding of human life upon the supramental realisation of conscious unity with the One and with all in our being and in all its members humanity must seek its final good and salvation. And this is what we have described as the fourth status of Life in its ascent towards the Godhead.

[1] *Rig Veda*, X. 129. 3.

[2] The Waters which are in the realm of light above the Sun and those which abide below. — *Rig Veda*, III. 22. 3.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Double Soul in Man

> The Purusha, the inner Self, no larger than the size of a man's thumb.
>
> *Katha Upanishad.*[1]
> *Swetaswatara Upanishad.*[2]

> He who knows this Self who is the eater of the honey of existence and the lord of what is and shall be, has thenceforward no shrinking.
>
> *Katha Upanishad.*[3]

> Whence shall he have grief, how shall he be deluded who sees everywhere the Oneness?
>
> *Isha Upanishad.*[4]

> He who has found the bliss of the Eternal has no fear from any quarter.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[5]

THE first status of Life we found to be characterised by a dumb inconscient drive or urge, a force of some involved will in the material or atomic existence, not free and possessor of itself or its works or their results, but entirely possessed by the universal movement in which it arises as the obscure unformed seed of individuality. The root of the second status is desire, eager to possess but limited in capacity; the bud of the third is Love which seeks both to possess and be possessed, to receive and to give itself; the fine flower of the fourth, its sign of perfection, we conceive as the pure and full emergence of the original will, the illumined fulfilment of the intermediate desire, the high and deep satisfaction of the conscious interchange of Love by the unification of the state of the possessor and possessed in the divine unity of souls which is the foundation of the supramental existence. If we scrutinise these terms carefully we shall see that they are shapes and stages of the soul's seeking for the individual and universal delight of things; the ascent of Life is in its nature the ascent of the divine Delight in things from its dumb conception in Matter through vicissitudes and opposites

[1] II. 1. 12. 13.; II. 3. 17. [2] III. 13. [3] II. 1. 5. [4] Verse 7. [5] II. 9.

to its luminous consummation in Spirit.

The world being what it is, it could not be otherwise. For the world is a masked form of Sachchidananda, and the nature of the consciousness of Sachchidananda and therefore the thing in which His force must always find and achieve itself is divine Bliss, an omnipresent self-delight. Since Life is an energy of His conscious-force, the secret of all its movements must be a hidden delight inherent in all things which is at once cause, motive and object of its activities; and if by reason of egoistic division that delight is missed, if it is held back behind a veil, if it is represented as its own opposite, even as being is masked in death, consciousness figures as the inconscient and force mocks itself with the guise of incapacity, then that which lives cannot be satisfied, cannot either rest from the movement or fulfil the movement except by laying hold on this universal delight which is at once the secret total delight of its own being and the original, all-encompassing, all-informing, all-upholding delight of the transcendent and immanent Sachchidananda. To seek for delight is therefore the fundamental impulse and sense of Life; to find and possess and fulfil it is its whole motive.

But where in us is this principle of Delight? through what term of our being does it manifest and fulfil itself in the action of the cosmos as the principle of Conscious-Force manifests and uses Life for its cosmic term and the principle of Supermind manifests and uses Mind? We have distinguished a fourfold principle of divine Being creative of the universe, — Existence, Conscious-Force, Bliss and Supermind. Supermind, we have seen, is omnipresent in the material cosmos, but veiled; it is behind the actual phenomenon of things and occultly expresses itself there, but uses for effectuation its own subordinate term, Mind. The divine Conscious-Force is omnipresent in the material cosmos, but veiled, operative secretly behind the actual phenomenon of things, and it expresses itself there characteristically through its own subordinate term, Life. And, though we have not yet examined separately the principle of Matter, yet we can already see that the divine All-existence also is omnipresent in the material cosmos, but veiled, hidden behind the actual phenomenon of things, and manifests itself there initially through its own

subordinate term, Substance, Form of being or Matter. Then, equally, the principle of divine Bliss must be omnipresent in the cosmos, veiled indeed and possessing itself behind the actual phenomenon of things, but still manifested in us through some subordinate principle of its own in which it is hidden and by which it must be found and achieved in the action of the universe.

That term is something in us which we sometimes call in a special sense the soul, — that is to say, the psychic principle which is not the life or the mind, much less the body, but which holds in itself the opening and flowering of the essence of all these to their own peculiar delight of self, to light, to love, to joy and beauty and to a refined purity of being. In fact, however, there is a double soul or psychic term in us, as every other cosmic principle in us is also double. For we have two minds, one the surface mind of our expressed evolutionary ego, the superficial mentality created by us in our emergence out of Matter, another a subliminal mind which is not hampered by our actual mental life and its strict limitations, something large, powerful and luminous, the true mental being behind that superficial form of mental personality which we mistake for ourselves. So also we have two lives, one outer, involved in the physical body, bound by its past evolution in Matter, which lives and was born and will die, the other a subliminal force of life which is not cabined between the narrow boundaries of our physical birth and death, but is our true vital being behind the form of living which we ignorantly take for our real existence. Even in the matter of our being there is this duality; for behind our body we have a subtler material existence which provides the substance not only of our physical but of our vital and mental sheaths and is therefore our real substance supporting this physical form which we erroneously imagine to be the whole body of our spirit. So too we have a double psychic entity in us, the surface desire-soul which works in our vital cravings, our emotions, aesthetic faculty and mental seeking for power, knowledge and happiness, and a subliminal psychic entity, a pure power of light, love, joy and refined essence of being which is our true soul behind the outer form of psychic existence we so often dignify by the name. It is when some

reflection of this larger and purer psychic entity comes to the surface that we say of a man, he has a soul, and when it is absent in his outward psychic life that we say of him, he has no soul.

The external forms of our being are those of our small egoistic existence; the subliminal are the formations of our larger true individuality. Therefore are these that concealed part of our being in which our individuality is close to our universality, touches it, is in constant relation and commerce with it. The subliminal mind in us is open to the universal knowledge of the cosmic Mind, the subliminal life in us to the universal force of the cosmic Life, the subliminal physicality in us to the universal force-formation of cosmic Matter; the thick walls which divide from these things our surface mind, life, body and which Nature has to pierce with so much trouble, so imperfectly and by so many skilful-clumsy physical devices, are there, in the subliminal, only a rarefied medium at once of separation and communication. So too is the subliminal soul in us open to the universal delight which the cosmic soul takes in its own existence and in the existence of the myriad souls that represent it and in the operations of mind, life and matter by which Nature lends herself to their play and development; but from this cosmic delight the surface soul is shut off by egoistic walls of great thickness which have indeed gates of penetration, but in their entry through them the touches of the divine cosmic Delight become dwarfed, distorted or have to come in masked as their own opposites.

It follows that in this surface or desire-soul there is no true soul-life, but a psychic deformation and wrong reception of the touch of things. The malady of the world is that the individual cannot find his real soul, and the root-cause of this malady is again that he cannot meet in his embrace of things outward the real soul of the world in which he lives. He seeks to find there the essence of being, the essence of power, the essence of conscious-existence, the essence of delight, but receives instead a crowd of contradictory touches and impressions. If he could find that essence, he would find also the one universal being, power, conscious existence and delight even in this throng of touches and impressions; the contradictions of what seems would be recon-

ciled in the unity and harmony of the Truth that reaches out to us in these contacts. At the same time he would find his own true soul and through it his self, because the true soul is his self's delegate and his self and the self of the world are one. But this he cannot do because of the egoistic ignorance in the mind of thought, the heart of emotion, the sense which responds to the touch of things not by a courageous and whole-hearted embrace of the world, but by a flux of reachings and shrinkings, cautious approaches or eager rushes and sullen or discontented or panic or angry recoils according as the touch pleases or displeases, comforts or alarms, satisfies or dissatisfies. It is the desire-soul that by its wrong reception of life becomes the cause of a triple misinterpretation of the *rasa*, the delight in things, so that, instead of figuring the pure essential joy of being, it comes rendered unequally into the three terms of pleasure, pain and indifference.

We have seen, when we considered the Delight of Existence in its relations to the world, that there is no absoluteness or essential validity in our standards of pleasure and pain and indifference, that they are entirely determined by the subjectivity of the receiving consciousness and that the degree of either pleasure and pain can be heightened to a maximum or depressed to a minimum or even effaced entirely in its apparent nature. Pleasure can become pain or pain pleasure because in their secret reality they are the same thing differently reproduced in the sensations and emotions. Indifference is either the inattention of the surface desire-soul in its mind, sensations, emotions and cravings to the *rasa* of things, or its incapacity to receive and respond to it, or its refusal to give any surface response or, again, its driving and crushing down of the pleasure or the pain by the will into the neutral tint of unacceptance. In all these cases what happens is that either there is a positive refusal or a negative unreadiness or incapacity to render or in any way represent positively on the surface something that is yet subliminally active.

For, as we now know by psychological observation and experiment that the subliminal mind receives and remembers all those touches of things which the surface mind ignores, so also we shall find that the subliminal soul responds to the *rasa*, or essence in experience, of these things which the surface desire-soul rejects

by distaste and refusal or ignores by neutral unacceptance. Self-knowledge is impossible unless we go behind our surface existence, which is a mere result of selective outer experiences, an imperfect sounding-board or a hasty, incompetent and fragmentary translation of a little out of the much that we are, — unless we go behind this and send down our plummet into the subconscient and open ourself to the superconscient so as to know their relation to our surface being. For between these three things our existence moves and finds in them its totality. The superconscient in us is one with the self and soul of the world and is not governed by any phenomenal diversity; it possesses therefore the truth of things and the delight of things in their plenitude. The subconscient, so-called[1], in that luminous head of itself which we call the subliminal, is, on the contrary, not a true possessor but an instrument of experience; it is not practically one with the soul and self of the world, but it is open to it through its world-experience. The subliminal soul is conscious inwardly of the *rasa* of things and has an equal delight in all contacts; it is conscious also of the values and standards of the surface desire-soul and receives on its own surface corresponding touches of pleasure, pain and indifference, but takes an equal delight in all. In other words, our real soul within takes joy of all its experiences, gathers from them strength, pleasure and knowledge, grows by them in its store and its plenty. It is this real soul in us which compels the shrinking desire-mind to bear and even to seek and find a pleasure in what is painful to it, to reject what is pleasant to it, to modify or even reverse its values, to equalise things in indifference or to equalise them in joy, the joy of the variety of existence. And this it does because it is impelled by the universal to develop itself by all kinds of experience so as to grow in Nature. Otherwise, if we lived only by the surface desire-soul, we could no more change or advance than the plant or stone in whose immobility or in whose routine of existence, because life is not superficially conscious, the secret soul of things

[1] The real subconscious is a nether diminished consciousness close to the Inconscient; the subliminal is a consciousness larger than our surface existence. But both belong to the inner realm of our being of which our surface is unaware, so both are jumbled together in our common conception and parlance.

has as yet no instrument by which it can rescue the life out of the fixed and narrow gamut into which it is born. The desire-soul left to itself would circle in the same grooves for ever.

In the view of old philosophies pleasure and pain are inseparable like intellectual truth and falsehood and power and incapacity and birth and death; therefore the only possible escape from them would be a total indifference, a blank response to the excitations of the world-self. But a subtler psychological knowledge shows us that this view which is based on the surface facts of existence only, does not really exhaust the possibilities of the problem. It is possible by bringing the real soul to the surface to replace the egoistic standards of pleasure and pain by an equal, an all-embracing personal-impersonal delight. The lover of Nature does this when he takes joy in all the things of Nature universally without admitting repulsion or fear or mere liking and disliking, perceiving beauty in that which seems to others mean and insignificant, bare and savage, terrible and repellent. The artist and the poet do it when they seek the *rasa* of the universal from the aesthetic emotion or from the physical line or from the mental form of beauty or from the inner sense and power alike of that from which the ordinary man turns away and of that to which he is attached by a sense of pleasure. The seeker of knowledge, the God-lover who finds the object of his love everywhere, the spiritual man, the intellectual, the sensuous, the aesthetic all do this in their own fashion and must do it if they would find embracingly the Knowledge, the Beauty, the Joy or the Divinity which they seek. It is only in the parts where the little ego is usually too strong for us, it is only in our emotional or physical joy and suffering, our pleasure and pain of life, before which the desire-soul in us is utterly weak and cowardly, that the application of the divine principle becomes supremely difficult and seems to many impossible or even monstrous and repellent. Here the ignorance of the ego shrinks from the principle of impersonality which it yet applies without too much difficulty in Science, in Art and even in a certain kind of imperfect spiritual living because there the rule of impersonality does not attack those desires cherished by the surface soul and those values of desire fixed by the surface mind in which our outward life is most

vitally interested. In the freer and higher movements there is demanded of us only a limited and specialised equality and impersonality proper to a particular field of consciousness and activity while the egoistic basis of our practical life remains to us; in the lower movements the whole foundation of our life has to be changed in order to make room for impersonality, and this the desire-soul finds impossible.

The true soul secret in us, — subliminal, we have said, but the word is misleading, for this presence is not situated below the threshold of waking mind, but rather burns in the temple of the inmost heart behind the thick screen of an ignorant mind, life and body, not subliminal but behind the veil, — this veiled psychic entity is the flame of the Godhead always alight within us, inextinguishable even by that dense unconsciousness of any spiritual self within which obscures our outward nature. It is a flame born out of the Divine and, luminous inhabitant of the Ignorance, grows in it till it is able to turn it towards the Knowledge. It is the concealed Witness and Control, the hidden Guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic. It is that which endures and is imperishable in us from birth to birth, untouched by death, decay or corruption, an indestructible spark of the Divine. Not the unborn Self or Atman, for the Self even in presiding over the existence of the individual is aware always of its universality and transcendence, it is yet its deputy in the forms of Nature, the individual soul, *caitya puruṣa*, supporting mind, life and body, standing behind the mental, the vital, the subtle-physical being in us and watching and profiting by their development and experience. These other person-powers in man, these beings of his being, are also veiled in their true entity, but they put forward temporary personalities which compose our outer individuality and whose combined superficial action and appearance of status we call ourselves: this inmost entity also, taking form in us as the psychic Person, puts forward a psychic personality which changes, grows, develops from life to life; for this is the traveller between birth and death and between death and birth, our nature parts are only its manifold and changing vesture. The psychic being can at first exercise only a concealed and partial and indirect action through the mind, life

life and the body, since it is these parts of Nature that have to be developed as its instruments of self-expression, and it is long confined by their evolution. Missioned to lead man in the Ignorance towards the light of the Divine Consciousness, it takes the essence of all experience in the Ignorance to form a nucleus of soul-growth in the nature; the rest it turns into material for the future growth of the instruments which it has to use until they are ready to be a luminous instrumentation of the Divine. It is this secret psychic entity which is the true original Conscience in us deeper than the constructed and conventional conscience of the moralist, for it is this which points always towards Truth and Right and Beauty, towards Love and Harmony and all that is a divine possibility in us, and persists till these things become the major need of our nature. It is the psychic personality in us that flowers as the saint, the sage, the seer; when it reaches its full strength, it turns the being towards the Knowledge of Self and the Divine, towards the supreme Truth, the supreme Good, the supreme Beauty, Love and Bliss, the divine heights and largenesses, and opens us to the touch of spiritual sympathy, universality, oneness. On the contrary, where the psychic personality is weak, crude or ill-developed, the finer parts and movements in us are lacking or poor in character and power, even though the mind may be forceful and brilliant, the heart of vital emotions hard and strong and masterful, the life-force dominant and successful, the bodily existence rich and fortunate and an apparent lord and victor. It is then the outer desire-soul, the pseudo-psychic entity, that reigns and we mistake its misinterpretations of psychic suggestion and aspiration, its ideas and ideals, its desires and yearnings for true soul-stuff and wealth of spiritual experience.[1] If the secret psychic Person can come

[1] The word "psychic" in our ordinary parlance is more often used in reference to this desire-soul than to the true psychic. It is used still more loosely of psychological and other phenomena of an abnormal or supernormal character which are really connected with the inner mind, inner vital, subtle physical being subliminal in us and are not at all direct operations of the psyche. Even such phenomena as materialisation and dematerialisation are included, though, if established, they evidently are not soul-action and would not shed any light upon the nature or existence of the psychic entity, but would rather be an abnormal action of an occult subtle physical energy intervening in the ordinary status of the gross body of things, reducing it to its own subtle condition and again reconstituting it in the terms of gross matter.

forward into the front and, replacing the desire-soul, govern overtly and entirely and not only partially and from behind the veil this outer nature of mind, life and body, then these can be cast into soul images of what is true, right and beautiful and in the end the whole nature can be turned towards the real aim of life, the supreme victory, the ascent into spiritual existence.

But it might seem then that by bringing this psychic entity, this true soul in us, into the front and giving it there the lead and rule we shall gain all the fulfilment of our natural being that we can seek for and open also the gates of the kingdom of the Spirit. And it might well be reasoned that there is no need for any intervention of a superior Truth-Consciousness or principle of Supermind to help us to attain to the divine status or the divine perfection. Yet, although the psychic transformation is one necessary condition of the total transformation of our existence, it is not all that is needed for the largest spiritual change. In the first place, since this is the individual soul in Nature, it can open to the hidden diviner ranges of our being and receive and reflect their light and power and experience, but another, a spiritual transformation from above is needed for us to possess our self in its universality and transcendence. By itself the psychic being at a certain stage might be content to create a formation of truth, good and beauty and make that its station; at a farther stage it might become passively subject to the world-self, a mirror of the universal existence, consciousness, power, delight, but not their full participant or possessor. Although more nearly and thrillingly united to the cosmic consciousness in knowledge, emotion and even appreciation through the senses, it might become purely recipient and passive, remote from mastery and action in the world; or, one with the static self behind the cosmos, but separate inwardly from the world-movement, losing its individuality in its Source, it might return to that Source and have neither the will nor the power any further for that which was its ultimate mission here, to lead the nature also towards its divine realisation. For the psychic being came into Nature from the Self, the Divine, and it can turn back from Nature to the silent Divine through the silence of the Self and a supreme

spiritual immobility. Again, an eternal portion of the Divine[1], this part is by the law of the Infinite inseparable from its Divine Whole, this part is indeed itself that Whole, except in its frontal appearance, its frontal separative self-experience; it may awaken to that reality and plunge into it to the apparent extinction or at least the merging of the individual existence. A small nucleus here in the mass of our ignorant Nature, so that it is described in the Upanishad as no bigger than a man's thumb, it can by the spiritual influx enlarge itself and embrace the whole world with the heart and mind in an intimate communion or oneness. Or it may become aware of its eternal Companion and elect to live for ever in His presence, in an imperishable union and oneness as the eternal lover with the eternal Beloved, which of all spiritual experiences is the most intense in beauty and rapture. All these are great and splendid achievements of our spiritual self-finding, but they are not necessarily the last end and entire consummation; more is possible.

For these are achievements of the spiritual mind in man; they are movements of that mind passing beyond itself, but on its own plane, into the splendours of the Spirit. Mind, even at its highest stages far beyond our present mentality, acts yet in its nature by division; it takes the aspects of the Eternal and treats each aspect as if it were the whole truth of the Eternal Being and can find in each its own perfect fulfilment. Even it erects them into opposites and creates a whole range of these opposites, the Silence of the Divine and the divine Dynamis, the immobile Brahman aloof from existence, without qualities, and the active Brahman with qualities, Lord of existence, Being and Becoming, the Divine Person and an impersonal pure Existence; it can then cut itself away from the one and plunge itself into the other as the sole abiding Truth of existence. It can regard the Person as the sole Reality or the Impersonal as alone true; it can regard the Lover as only a means of expression of eternal Love or love as only the self-expression of the Lover; it can see beings as only personal powers of an impersonal Existence or impersonal existence as only a state of the one Being, the Infinite Person. Its spiritual achievement, its road of passage

[1] *Gita*, XV. 7.

towards the supreme aim will follow these dividing lines. But beyond this movement of spiritual Mind is the higher experience of the Supermind Truth-Consciousness; there these opposites disappear and these partialities are relinquished in the rich totality of a supreme and integral realisation of eternal Being. It is this that is the aim we have conceived, the consummation of our existence here by an ascent to the supramental Truth-Consciousness and its descent into our nature. The psychic transformation after rising into the spiritual change has then to be completed, integralised, exceeded and uplifted by a supramental transformation which lifts it to the summit of the ascending endeavour.

Even as between the other divided and opposed terms of manifested Being, so also a supramental consciousness-energy could alone establish a perfect harmony between these two terms, — apparently opposite only because of the Ignorance, — of spirit status and world dynamism in our embodied existence. In the Ignorance Nature centres the order of her psychological movements, not around the secret spiritual self, but around its substitute, the ego-principle: a certain ego-centrism is the basis on which we bind together our experiences and relations in the midst of the complex contacts, contradictions, dualities, incoherences of the world in which we live; this ego-centrism is our rock of safety against the cosmic and the infinite, our defence. But in our spiritual change we have to forego this defence; ego has to vanish, the person finds itself dissolved into a vast impersonality, and in this impersonality there is at first no key to an ordered dynamism of action. A very usual result is that one is divided into two parts of being, the spiritual within, the natural without; in one there is the divine realisation seated in a perfect inner freedom, but the natural part goes on with the old action of Nature, continues by a mechanical movement of past energies her already transmitted impulse. Even, if there is an entire dissolution of the limited person and the old ego-centric order, the outer nature may become the field of an apparent incoherence, although all within is luminous with the Self. Thus we become outwardly inert and inactive, moved by circumstance or forces but not self-mobile,[1] even though the consciousness is

[1] *jaḍavat.*

enlightened within, or as a child though within is a plenary self-knowledge,[1] or as one inconsequent in thought and impulse though within is an utter calm and serenity,[2] or as the wild and disordered soul though inwardly there is the purity and poise of the Spirit.[3] Or if there is an ordered dynamism in the outward nature, it may be a continuation of superficial ego-action witnessed but not accepted by the inner being, or a mental dynamism that cannot be perfectly expressive of the inner spiritual realisation; for there is no equipollence between action of mind and status of spirit. Even at the best where there is an intuitive guidance of Light from within, the nature of its expression in dynamism of action must be marked with the imperfections of mind, life and body, a King with incapable ministers, a Knowledge expressed in the values of the Ignorance. Only the descent of the Supermind with its perfect unity of Truth-Knowledge and Truth-Will can establish in the outer as in the inner existence the harmony of the Spirit; for it alone can turn the values of the Ignorance entirely into the values of the Knowledge.

In the fulfilment of our psychic being as in the consummation of our parts of mind and life, it is the relating of it to its divine source, to its correspondent truth in the Supreme Reality, that is the indispensable movement; and, here too as there, it is by the power of the Supermind that it can be done with an integral completeness, an intimacy that becomes an authentic identity; for it is the Supermind which links the higher and the lower hemispheres of the One Existence. In Supermind is the integrating Light, the consummating Force, the wide entry into the supreme Ananda: the psychic being uplifted by that Light and Force can unite itself with the original Delight of existence from which it came: overcoming the dualities of pain and pleasure, delivering from all fear and shrinking the mind, life and body, it can recast the contacts of existence in the world into terms of the Divine Ananda.

[1] *bālavat.* [2] *unmattavat.* [3] *piśācavat.*

CHAPTER XXIV

Matter

He arrived at the knowledge that Matter is Brahman.

Taittiriya Upanishad.[1]

WE HAVE now the rational assurance that Life is neither an inexplicable dream nor an impossible evil that has yet become a dolorous fact, but a mighty pulsation of the divine All-Existence. We see something of its foundation and its principle, we look upward to its high potentiality and ultimate divine out-flowering. But there is one principle below all the others which we have not yet sufficiently considered, the principle of Matter upon which Life stands as upon a pedestal or out of which it evolves like the form of a many-branching tree out of its encasing seed. The mind, life and body of man depend upon this physical principle, and if the out-flowering of Life is the result of Consciousness emerging into Mind, expanding, elevating itself in search of its own truth in the largeness of the supramental existence, yet it seems also to be conditioned by this case of body and by this foundation of Matter. The importance of the body is obvious; it is because he has developed or been given a body and brain capable of receiving and serving a progressive mental illumination that man has risen above the animal. Equally, it can only be by developing a body or at least a functioning of the physical instrument capable of receiving and serving a still higher illumination that he will rise above himself and realise, not merely in thought and in his internal being but in life, a perfectly divine manhood. Otherwise either the promise of Life is cancelled, its meaning annulled and earthly being can only realise Sachchidananda by abolishing itself, by shedding from it mind, life and body and returning to the pure Infinite, or else man is not the divine instrument, there is a destined limit to the consciously progressive power which distinguishes him from all other terrestrial existences and as he has replaced them in the front of things, so another must

[1] III. 2.

eventually replace him and assume his heritage.

It seems indeed that the body is from the beginning the soul's great difficulty, its continual stumbling-block and rock of offence. Therefore the eager seeker of spiritual fulfilment has hurled his ban against the body and his world-disgust selects this world-principle above all other things as an especial object of loathing. The body is the obscure burden that he cannot bear; its obstinate material grossness is the obsession that drives him for deliverance to the life of the ascetic. To get rid of it he has even gone so far as to deny its existence and the reality of the material universe. Most of the religions have put their curse upon Matter and have made the refusal or the resigned temporary endurance of the physical life the test of religious truth and of spirituality. The older creeds, more patient, more broodingly profound, not touched with the torture and the feverish impatience of the soul under the burden of the Iron Age, did not make this formidable division; they acknowledged Earth the Mother and Heaven the Father and accorded to them an equal love and reverence; but their ancient mysteries are obscure and unfathomable to our gaze who, whether our view of things be materialistic or spiritual, are alike content to cut the Gordian knot of the problem of existence with one decisive blow and to accept an escape into an eternal bliss or an end in an eternal annihilation or an eternal quietude.

The quarrel does not really commence with our awakening to our spiritual possibilities; it begins from the appearance of life itself and its struggle to establish its activities and its permanent aggregations of living form against the force of inertia, against the force of inconscience, against the force of atomic disaggregation which are in the material principle the knot of the great Denial. Life is at constant war with Matter and the battle seems always to end in the apparent defeat of Life and in that collapse downward to the material principle which we call death. The discord deepens with the appearance of Mind; for Mind has its own quarrel with both Life and Matter: it is at constant war with their limitations, in constant subjection to and revolt against the grossness and inertia of the one and the passions and sufferings of the other; and the battle seems to turn eventually, though

not very surely, towards a partial and costly victory for the Mind in which it conquers, represses or even slays the vital cravings, impairs the physical force and disturbs the balance of the body in the interests of a greater mental activity and a higher moral being. It is in this struggle that the impatience of Life, the disgust of the body and the recoil from both towards a pure mental and moral existence take their rise. When man awakens to an existence beyond Mind, he carries yet farther this principle of discord. Mind, Body and Life are condemned as the trinity of the world, the flesh and the devil. Mind too is banned as the source of all our malady; war is declared between the spirit and its instruments and the victory of the spiritual Inhabitant is sought for in an evasion from its narrow residence, a rejection of mind, life and body and a withdrawal into its own infinitudes. The world is a discord and we shall best solve its perplexities by carrying the principle of discord itself to its extreme possibility, a cutting away and a final severance.

But these defeats and victories are only apparent, this solution is not a solution but an escape from the problem. Life is not really defeated by Matter; it makes a compromise by using death for the continuance of life. Mind is not really victorious over Life and Matter, but has only achieved an imperfect development of some of its potentialities at the cost of others which are bound up with the unrealised or rejected possibilities of its better use of life and body. The individual soul has not conquered the lower triplicity, but only rejected their claim upon it and fled from the work which spirit had undertaken when it first cast itself into form of universe. The problem continues because the labour of the Divine in the universe continues, but without any satisfying solution of the problem or any victorious accomplishment of the labour. Therefore, since our own standpoint is that Sachchidananda is the beginning and the middle and the end and that struggle and discord cannot be eternal and fundamental principles in His being but by their very existence imply labour towards a perfect solution and a complete victory, we must seek that solution in a real victory of Life over Matter through the free and perfect use of body by Life, in a real victory of Mind over Life and Matter through a free and perfect use of life-force

and form by Mind and in a real victory of Spirit over the triplicity through a free and perfect occupation of mind, life and body by conscious spirit; in the view we have worked out this last conquest can alone make the others really possible. To the end, then, that we may see how these conquests can be at all or wholly possible, we must find out the reality of Matter just as, seeking the fundamental knowledge, we have found out the reality of Mind and Soul and Life.

In a certain sense Matter is unreal and non-existent; that is to say, our present knowledge, idea and experience of Matter is not its truth, but merely a phenomenon of particular relation between our senses and the all-existence in which we move. When Science discovers that Matter resolves itself into forms of Energy, it has hold of a universal and fundamental truth; and when philosophy discovers that Matter only exists as substantial appearance to the consciousness and that the one reality is Spirit or pure conscious Being, it has hold of a greater and completer, a still more fundamental truth. But still the question remains why Energy should take the form of Matter and not of mere force-currents or why that which is really Spirit should admit the phenomenon of Matter and not rest in states, velleities and joys of the spirit. This, it is said, is the work of Mind or else, since evidently Thought does not directly create or even perceive the material form of things, it is the work of Sense; the sense-mind creates the forms which it seems to perceive and the thought-mind works upon the forms which the sense-mind presents to it. But, evidently, the individual embodied mind is not the creator of the phenomenon of Matter; earth-existence cannot be the result of the human mind which is itself the result of earth-existence. If we say that the world exists only in our own minds, we express a non-fact and a confusion; for the material world existed before man was upon the earth and it will go on existing if man disappears from the earth or even if our individual mind abolishes itself in the Infinite. We must conclude then that there is a universal Mind,[1] subconscious to us in the form of the

[1] Mind, as we know it, creates only in a relative and instrumental sense; it has an unlimited power of combination, but its creative motives and forms come to it from above: all created forms have their base in the Infinite above Mind, Life and Matter and are here

universe or superconscious in its spirit, which has created that form for its habitation. And since the creator must have preceded and must exceed its creation, this really implies a superconscient Mind which by the instrumentality of a universal sense creates in itself the relation of form with form and constitutes the rhythm of the material universe. But this also is no complete solution; it tells us that Matter is a creation of Consciousness, but it does not explain how Consciousness came to create Matter as the basis of its cosmic workings.

We shall understand better if we go back at once to the original principle of things. Existence is in its activity a Conscious-Force which presents the workings of its force to its consciousness as forms of its own being. Since Force is only the action of one sole-existing Conscious-Being, its results can be nothing else but forms of that Conscious-Being; Substance or Matter, then, is only a form of Spirit. The appearance which this form of Spirit assumes to our senses is due to that dividing action of Mind from which we have been able to deduce consistently the whole phenomenon of the universe. We know now that Life is an action of Conscious-Force of which material forms are the result; Life involved in those forms, appearing in them first as inconscient force, evolves and brings back into manifestation as Mind the consciousness which is the real self of the force and which never ceased to exist in it even when unmanifest. We know also that Mind is an inferior power of the original conscious Knowledge or Supermind, a power to which Life acts as an instrumental energy; for, descending through Supermind, Consciousness or Chit represents itself as Mind, Force of consciousness or Tapas represents itself as Life. Mind, by its separation from its own higher reality in Supermind, gives Life the appearance of division and, by its farther involution in its own Life-Force, becomes subconscious in Life and thus gives the outward appearance of an inconscient force to its material workings. Therefore, the inconscience, the inertia,

represented, reconstructed — very usually misconstructed — from the infinitesimal. Their foundation is above, their branchings downwards, says the Rig Veda. The superconscient Mind of which we speak might rather be called an Overmind and inhabits in the hierarchical order of the powers of the Spirit, a zone directly dependent on the supramental consciousness.

the atomic disaggregation of Matter must have their source in this all-dividing and self-involving action of Mind by which our universe came into being. As Mind is only a final action of Supermind in the descent towards creation and Life an action of Conscious-Force working in the conditions of the Ignorance created by this descent of Mind, so Matter, as we know it, is only the final form taken by conscious-being as the result of that working. Matter is substance of the one Conscious-Being phenomenally divided within itself by the action of a universal Mind[1], — a division which the individual mind repeats and dwells in, but which does not abrogate or at all diminish the unity of Spirit or the unity of Energy or the real unity of Matter.

But why this phenomenal and pragmatic division of an indivisible Existence? It is because Mind has to carry the principle of multiplicity to its extreme potential which can only be done by separativeness and division. To do that it must, precipitating itself into Life to create forms for the Multiple, give to the universal principle of Being the appearance of a gross and material substance instead of a pure or subtle substance. It must, that is to say, give it the appearance of substance which offers itself to the contact of Mind as stable thing or object in an abiding multiplicity of objects and not of substance which offers itself to the contact of pure consciousness as something of its own eternal pure existence and reality or to subtle sense as a principle of plastic form freely expressive of the conscious being. The contact of mind with its objects creates what we call sense, but here it has to be an obscure externalised sense which must be assured of the reality of what it contacts. The descent of pure substance into material substance follows, then, inevitably on the descent of Sachchidananda through Supermind into mind and life. It is a necessary result of the will to make multiplicity of being and an awareness of things from separate centres of consciousness the first method of this lower experience of existence. If we go back to the spiritual basis of things, substance in its utter purity resolves itself into pure conscious being,

[1] Mind is here used in its widest sense including the operation of an Overmind power which is nearest to the supramental Truth-Consciousness and which is the first fountain of the creation of the Ignorance.

self-existent, inherently self-aware by identity, but not yet turning its consciousness upon itself as object. Supermind preserves this self-awareness by identity as its substance of self-knowledge and its light of self-creation, but for that creation presents Being to itself as the subject-object one and multiple of its own active consciousness. Being as object is held there in a supreme knowledge which can, by comprehension, see it both as an object of cognition within itself and subjectively as itself, but can also and simultaneously, by apprehension, project it as an object (or objects) of cognition within the circumference of its consciousness, not other than itself, part of its being, but a part (or parts) put away from itself, — that is to say, from the centre of vision in which Being concentrates itself as the Knower, Witness or Purusha. We have seen that from this apprehending consciousness arises the movement of Mind, the movement by which the individual knower regards a form of his own universal being as if other than he; but in the divine Mind there is immediately or rather simultaneously another movement or reverse side of the same movement, an act of union in being which heals this phenomenal division and prevents it from becoming even for a moment solely real to the knower. This act of conscious union is that which is represented otherwise in dividing Mind obtusely, ignorantly, quite externally as contact in consciousness between divided beings and separate objects, and with us this contact in divided consciousness is primarily represented by the principle of sense. On this basis of sense, on this contact of union subject to division, the action of the thought-mind founds itself and prepares for the return to a higher principle of union in which division is made subject to unity and subordinate. Substance, then, as we know it, material substance, is the form in which Mind acting through sense contacts the Conscious Being of which it is itself a movement of knowledge.

But Mind by its very nature tends to know and sense substance of conscious-being, not in its unity or totality but by the principle of division. It sees it, as it were, in infinitesimal points which it associates together in order to arrive at a totality, and into these viewpoints and associations cosmic Mind throws itself and dwells in them. So dwelling, creative by its inherent

CHAPTER XXV

The Knot of Matter

> I cannot travel to the Truth of the luminous Lord by force or by the duality.... Who are they that protect the foundation of the falsehood? Who are the guardians of the unreal word?
>
> Then existence was not nor non-existence, the mid-world was not nor the Ether nor what is beyond. What covered all? where was it? in whose refuge? what was that ocean dense and deep? Death was not nor immortality nor the knowledge of day and night. That One lived without breath by his self-law, there was nothing else nor aught beyond it. In the beginning Darkness was hidden by darkness, all this was an ocean of inconscience. When universal being was concealed by fragmentation, then by the greatness of its energy That One was born. That moved at first as desire within, which was the primal seed of mind. The seers of Truth discovered the building of being in non-being by will in the heart and by the thought; their ray was extended horizontally; but what was there below, what was there above? There were Casters of the seed, there were Greatnesses; there was self-law below, there was Will above.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[1]

IF THEN the conclusion at which we have arrived is correct, — and there is no other possible on the data upon which we are working, — the sharp division which practical experience and long habit of mind have created between Spirit and Matter has no longer any fundamental reality. The world is a differentiated unity, a manifold oneness, not a constant attempt at compromise between eternal dissonances, not an everlasting struggle between irreconcilable opposites. An inalienable oneness generating infinite variety is its foundation and beginning; a constant reconciliation behind apparent division and struggle combining all possible disparates for vast ends in a secret Consciousness and Will which is ever one and master of all its own complex action, appears to be its real character in the middle; we must assume therefore that a fulfilment of the emerging Will and Consciousness and a triumphant harmony must be its conclusion. Substance is the form of itself on which it works; and of that substance if Matter is one end,

[1] V. 12. 2, 4; X. 129. 1-5.

Spirit is the other. The two are one: Spirit is the soul and reality of that which we sense as Matter; Matter is a form and body of that which we realise as Spirit.

Certainly, there is a vast practical difference and on that difference the whole indivisible series and ever-ascending degrees of the world-existence are founded. Substance, we have said, is conscious existence presenting itself to the sense as object so that, on the basis of whatever sense-relation is established, the work of world-formation and cosmic progression may proceed. But there need not be only one basis, only one fundamental principle of relation immutably created between sense and substance; on the contrary, there is an ascending and developing series. We are aware of another substance in which pure mind works as its natural medium and which is far subtler, more flexible, more plastic than anything that our physical sense can conceive of as Matter. We can speak of a substance of mind because we become aware of a subtler medium in which forms arise and action takes place; we can speak also of a substance of pure dynamic life-energy other than the subtlest forms of material substance and its physically sensible force-currents. Spirit itself is pure substance of being presenting itself as an object no longer to physical, vital or mental sense, but to a light of a pure spiritual perceptive knowledge in which the subject becomes its own object, that is to say, in which the Timeless and Spaceless is aware of itself in a pure spiritually self-conceptive self-extension as the basis and primal material of all existence. Beyond this foundation is the disappearance of all conscious differentiation between subject and object in an absolute identity, and there we can no longer speak of Substance.

Therefore it is a purely conceptive — a spiritually, not a mentally conceptive difference ending in a practical distinction, which creates the series descending from Spirit through Mind to Matter and ascending again from Matter through Mind to Spirit. But the real oneness is never abrogated, and, when we get back to the original and integral view of things, we see that it is never even truly diminished or impaired, not even in the grossest densities of Matter. Brahman is not only the cause and supporting power and indwelling principle of the universe, he is also its

material and its sole material. Matter also is Brahman and it is nothing other than or different from Brahman. If indeed Matter were cut off from Spirit, this would not be so; but it is, as we have seen, only a final form and objective aspect of the divine Existence with all of God ever present in it and behind it. As this apparently brute and inert Matter is everywhere and always instinct with a mighty dynamic force of Life, as this dynamic but apparently unconscious Life secretes within it an ever-working unapparent Mind of whose secret dealings it is the overt energy, as this ignorant, unillumined and groping Mind in the living body is supported and sovereignly guided by its own real self, the Supermind, which is there equally in unmentalised Matter, so all Matter as well as all Life, Mind and Supermind are only modes of the Brahman, the Eternal, the Spirit, Sachchidananda, who not only dwells in them all, but is all these things though no one of them is His absolute being.

But still there is this conceptive difference and practical distinction, and in that, even if Matter is not really cut off from Spirit, yet it seems with such a practical definiteness to be so cut off, it is so different, even so contrary in its law, the material life seems so much to be the negation of all spiritual existence that its rejection might well appear to be the one short cut out of the difficulty, — as undoubtedly it is; but a short cut or any cut is no solution. Still, there, in Matter undoubtedly lies the crux; that raises the obstacle: for because of Matter Life is gross and limited and stricken with death and pain, because of Matter Mind is more than half blind, its wings clipped, its feet tied to a narrow perch and held back from the vastness and freedom above of which it is conscious. Therefore the exclusive spiritual seeker is justified from his viewpoint if, disgusted with the mud of Matter, revolted by the animal grossness of Life or impatient of the self-imprisoned narrowness and downward vision of Mind, he determines to break from it all and return by inaction and silence to the Spirit's immobile liberty. But that is not the sole viewpoint, nor, because it has been sublimely held or glorified by shining and golden examples, need we consider it the integral and ultimate wisdom. Rather, liberating ourselves from all passion and revolt, let us see what this divine order of the universe means, and, as for

this great knot and tangle of Matter denying the Spirit, let us seek to find out and separate its strands so as to loosen it by a solution and not cut through it by a violence. We must state the difficulty, the opposition first, entirely, trenchantly, with exaggeration, if need be, rather than with diminution, and then look for the issue.

First, then, the fundamental opposition Matter presents to Spirit is this that it is the culmination of the principle of Ignorance. Here Consciousness has lost and forgotten itself in a form of its works, as a man might forget in extreme absorption not only who he is but that he is at all and become momentarily only the work that is being done and the force that is doing it. The Spirit self-luminous, infinitely aware of itself behind all workings of force and their master, seems here to have disappeared and not to be at all; somewhere He is perhaps, but here He seems to have left only a brute and inconscient material Force which creates and destroys eternally without knowing itself or what it creates or why it creates at all or why it destroys what once it has created: it does not know, for it has no mind; it does not care, for it has no heart. And if that is not the real truth even of the material universe, if behind all this false phenomenon there is a Mind, a Will and something greater than Mind or mental Will, yet it is this dark semblance that the material universe itself presents as a truth to the consciousness which emerges in it out of its night; and if it be no truth but a lie, yet is it a most effective lie, for it determines the conditions of our phenomenal existence and besieges all our aspiration and effort.

For this is the monstrous thing, the terrible and pitiless miracle of the material universe that out of this no-Mind a mind or, at least, minds emerge and find themselves struggling feebly for light, helpless individually, only less helpless when in self-defence they associate their individual feeblenesses in the midst of the giant Ignorance which is the law of the universe. Out of this heartless Inconscience and within its rigorous jurisdiction hearts have been born and aspire and are tortured and bleed under the weight of the blind and insentient cruelty of this iron existence, a cruelty which lays its law upon them and becomes sentient in their sentience, brutal, ferocious, horrible. But what after all,

behind appearances, is this seeming mystery? We can see that it is the Consciousness which had lost itself returning again to itself, emerging out of its giant self-forgetfulness, slowly, painfully, as a Life that is would-be sentient, half-sentient, dimly sentient, wholly sentient and finally struggles to be more than sentient, to be again divinely self-conscious, free, infinite, immortal. But it works towards this under a law that is the opposite of all these things, under the conditions of Matter, that is to say, against the grasp of the Ignorance. The movements it has to follow, the instruments it has to use are set and made for it by this brute and divided Matter and impose on it at every step ignorance and limitation.

For the second fundamental opposition that Matter offers to Spirit, is this that it is the culmination of bondage to mechanic Law and opposes to all that seeks to liberate itself a colossal Inertia. Not that Matter itself is inert; it is rather an infinite motion, an inconceivable force, a limitless action, whose grandiose movements are a subject for our constant admiration. But while Spirit is free, master of itself and its works, not bound by them, creator of law and not its subject, this giant Matter is rigidly chained by a fixed and mechanical Law which is imposed on it, which it does not understand nor has ever conceived but works out inconsciently as a machine works and knows not who created it, by what process or to what end. And when Life awakes and seeks to impose itself on physical form and material force and to use all things at its own will and for its own need, when Mind awakes and seeks to know the who, the why, the how of itself and all things and above all to use its knowledge for the imposition of its own freer law and self-guiding action upon things, material Nature seems to yield, even to approve and aid, though after a struggle, reluctantly and only up to a certain point. But beyond that point it presents an obstinate inertia, obstruction, negation and even persuades Life and Mind that they cannot go farther, cannot pursue to the end their partial victory. Life strives to enlarge and prolong itself and succeeds; but when it seeks utter wideness and immortality, it meets the iron obstruction of Matter and finds itself bound to narrowness and death. Mind seeks to aid life and to fulfil its own impulse to embrace all know-

ledge, to become all light, to possess truth and be truth, to enforce love and joy and be love and joy; but always there is the deviation and error and grossness of the material life-instincts and the denial and obstruction of the material sense and the physical instruments. Error ever pursues its knowledge, darkness is inseparably the companion and background of its light; truth is successfully sought and yet, when grasped, it ceases to be truth and the quest has to continue; love is there but it cannot satisfy itself, joy is there but it cannot justify itself, and each of them drags as if its chain or casts as if its shadow its own opposites, anger and hatred and indifference, satiety and grief and pain. The inertia with which Matter responds to the demands of the Mind and Life, prevents the conquest of the Ignorance and of the brute Force that is the power of the Ignorance.

And when we seek to know why this is so, we see that the success of this inertia and obstruction is due to a third power of Matter; for the third fundamental opposition which Matter offers to Spirit is this that it is the culmination of the principle of division and struggle. Indivisible indeed in reality, divisibility is its whole basis of action from which it seems forbidden ever to depart; for its only two methods of union are either the aggregation of units or an assimilation which involves the destruction of one unit by another; and both of these methods of union are a confession of eternal division, since even the first associates rather than unifies and by its very principle admits the constant possibility and therefore the ultimate necessity of dissociation, of dissolution. Both methods repose on death, one as a means, the other as a condition of life. And both presuppose as the condition of world-existence a constant struggle of the divided units with each other, each striving to maintain itself, to maintain its associations, to compel or destroy what resists it, to gather in and devour others as its food, but itself moved to revolt against and flee from compulsion, destruction and assimilation by devouring. When the vital principle manifests its activities in Matter, it finds there this basis only for all its activities and is compelled to bow itself to the yoke; it has to accept the law of death, desire and limitation and that constant struggle to devour, possess, dominate which we have seen to be the first aspect of Life. And when

the mental principle manifests in Matter, it has to accept from the mould and material in which it works the same principle of limitation, of seeking without secure finding, the same constant association and dissociation of its gains and of the constituents of its works, so that the knowledge gained by man, the mental being, seems never to be final or free from doubt and denial and all his labour seems condemned to move in a rhythm of action and reaction and of making and unmaking, in cycles of creation and brief preservation and long destruction with no certain and assured progress.

Especially and most fatally, the ignorance, inertia and division of Matter impose on the vital and mental existence emerging in it the law of pain and suffering and the unrest of dissatisfaction with its status of division, inertia and ignorance. Ignorance would indeed bring no pain of dissatisfaction if the mental consciousness were entirely ignorant, if it could halt satisfied in some shell of custom, unaware of its own ignorance or of the infinite ocean of consciousness and knowledge by which it lives surrounded; but precisely it is to this that the emerging consciousness in Matter awakes, first, to its ignorance of the world in which it lives and which it has to know and master in order to be happy, secondly, to the ultimate barrenness and limitation of this knowledge, to the meagreness and insecurity of the power and happiness it brings and to the awareness of an infinite consciousness, knowledge, true being in which alone is to be found a victorious and infinite happiness. Nor would the obstruction of inertia bring with it unrest and dissatisfaction if the vital sentience emerging in Matter were entirely inert, if it were kept satisfied with its own half-conscient limited existence, unaware of the infinite power and immortal existence in which it lives as part of and yet separated from it, or if it had nothing within driving it towards the effort really to participate in that infinity and immortality. But this is precisely what all life is driven to feel and seek from the first, its insecurity and the need and struggle for persistence, for self-preservation; it awakes in the end to the limitation of its existence and begins to feel the impulsion towards largeness and persistence, towards the infinite and the eternal.

And when in man life becomes wholly self-conscious, this unavoidable struggle and effort and aspiration reach their acme and the pain and discord of the world become finally too keenly sensible to be borne with contentment. Man may for a long time quiet himself by seeking to be satisfied with his limitations or by confining his struggle to such mastery as he can gain over this material world he inhabits, some mental and physical triumph of his progressive knowledge over its inconscient fixities, of his small, concentrated conscious will and power over its inertly-driven monstrous forces. But here, too, he finds the limitation, the poor inconclusiveness of the greatest results he can achieve and is obliged to look beyond. The finite cannot remain permanently satisfied so long as it is conscious either of a finite greater than itself or of an infinite beyond itself to which it can yet aspire. And if the finite could be so satisfied, yet the apparently finite being who feels himself to be really an infinite or feels merely the presence or the impulse and stirring of an infinite within, can never be satisfied till these two are reconciled, till that is possessed by him and he is possessed by it in whatever degree or manner. Man is such a finite-seeming infinity and cannot fail to arrive at a seeking after the Infinite. He is the first son of earth who becomes vaguely aware of God within him, of his immortality or of his need of immortality, and the knowledge is a whip that drives and a cross of crucifixion until he is able to turn it into a source of infinite light and joy and power.

This progressive development, this growing manifestation of the divine Consciousness and Force, Knowledge and Will that had lost itself in the ignorance and inertia of Matter, might well be a happy efflorescence proceeding from joy to greater and at last to infinite joy if it were not for the principle of rigid division from which Matter has started. The shutting up of the individual in his own personal consciousness of separate and limited mind, life and body prevents what would otherwise be the natural law of our development. It brings into the body the law of attraction and repulsion, of defence and attack, of discord and pain. For each body being a limited conscious-force feels itself exposed to the attack, impact, forceful contact of other such limited conscious-force or of universal forces and, where it feels itself

broken in upon or unable to harmonise the contacting and the recipient consciousness, it suffers discomfort and pain, is attracted or repelled, has to defend itself or to assail; it is constantly called upon to undergo what it is unwilling or unable to suffer. Into the emotional and the sense-mind the law of division brings the same reactions with the higher values of grief and joy, love and hatred, oppression and depression, all cast into terms of desire, and by desire into straining and effort, and by the straining into excess and defect of force, incapacity, the rhythm of attainment and disappointment, possession and recoil, a constant strife and trouble and unease. Into the mind as a whole, instead of a divine law of narrower truth flowing into greater truth, lesser light taken up into wider light, lower will surrendered to higher transforming will, pettier satisfaction progressing towards nobler and more complete satisfaction, it brings similar dualities of truth pursued by error, light by darkness, power by incapacity, pleasure of pursuit and attainment by pain of repulse and of dissatisfaction with what is attained; mind takes up its own affliction along with the affliction of life and body and becomes aware of the triple defect and insufficiency of our natural being. All this means the denial of Ananda, the negation of the trinity of Sachchidananda and therefore, if the negation be insuperable, the futility of existence; for existence in throwing itself out in the play of consciousness and force must seek that movement not merely for itself, but for satisfaction in the play, and if in the play no real satisfaction can be found, it must obviously be abandoned in the end as a vain attempt, a colossal mistake, a delirium of the self-embodying spirit.

This is the whole basis of the pessimist theory of the world, — optimist, it may be, as to worlds and states beyond, but pessimist as to the earthly life and the destiny of the mental being in his dealings with the material universe. For it affirms that since the very nature of material existence is division and the very seed of embodied mind is self-limitation, ignorance and egoism, to seek satisfaction of the spirit upon earth or to seek an issue and divine purpose and culmination for the world-play is a vanity and delusion; only in a heaven of the Spirit and not in the world, or only in the Spirit's true quietude and not in its phenomenal acti-

vities can we reunite existence and consciousness with the divine self-delight. The Infinite can only recover itself by rejecting as an error and a false step its attempt to find itself in the finite. Nor can the emergence of mental consciousness in the material universe bring with it any promise of a divine fulfilment. For the principle of division is not proper to Matter, but to Mind; Matter is only an illusion of Mind into which Mind brings its own rule of division and ignorance. Therefore within this illusion Mind can only find itself; it can only travel between the three terms of the divided existence it has created: it cannot find there the unity of the Spirit or the truth of the spiritual existence.

Now it is true that the principle of division in Matter can be only a creation of the divided Mind which has precipitated itself into material existence; for that material existence has no self-being, is not the original phenomenon but only a form created by an all-dividing Life-force which works out the conceptions of an all-dividing Mind. By working out being into these appearances of the ignorance, inertia and division of Matter the dividing Mind has lost and imprisoned itself in a dungeon of its own building, is bound with chains which it has itself forged. And if it be true that the dividing Mind is the first principle of creation, then it must be also the ultimate attainment possible in the creation, and the mental being struggling vainly with Life and Matter, overpowering them only to be overpowered by them, repeating eternally a fruitless cycle must be the last and highest word of cosmic existence. But no such consequence ensues if, on the contrary, it is the immortal and infinite Spirit that has veiled itself in the dense robe of material substance and works there by the supreme creative power of Supermind, permitting the divisions of Mind and the reign of the lowest or material principle only as initial conditions for a certain evolutionary play of the One in the Many. If, in other words, it is not merely a mental being who is hidden in the forms of the universe, but the infinite Being, Knowledge, Will which emerges out of Matter first as Life, then as Mind, with the rest of it still unrevealed, then the emergence of consciousness out of the apparently Inconscient must have another and completer term; the appearance of a supramental spiritual being who shall impose on his mental,

vital, bodily workings a higher law than that of the dividing Mind is no longer impossible. On the contrary, it is the natural and inevitable conclusion of the nature of cosmic existence.

Such a supramental being would, as we have seen, liberate the mind from the knot of its divided existence and use the individualisation of mind as merely a useful subordinate action of the all-embracing Supermind; and he would liberate the life also from the knot of its divided existence and use the individualisation of life as merely a useful subordinate action of the one Conscious-Force fulfilling its being and joy in a diversified unity. Is there any reason why he should not also liberate the bodily existence from the present law of death, division and mutual devouring and use individualisation of body as merely a useful subordinate term of the one divine Conscious-Existence made serviceable for the joy of the Infinite in the finite? or why this spirit should not be free in a sovereign occupation of form, consciously immortal even in the changing of his robe of Matter, possessed of his self-delight in a world subjected to the law of unity and love and beauty? And if man be the inhabitant of terrestrial existence through whom that transformation of the mental into the supramental can at last be operated, is it not possible that he may develop, as well as a divine mind and a divine life, also a divine body? or, if the phrase seem to be too startling to our present limited conceptions of human potentiality, may he not in his development of his true being and its light and joy and power arrive at a divine use of mind and life and body by which the descent of Spirit into form shall be at once humanly and divinely justified?

The one thing that can stand in the way of that ultimate terrestrial possibility is if our present view of Matter and its laws represent the only possible relation between sense and substance, between the Divine as knower and the Divine as object, or if, other relations being possible, they are yet not in any way possible here, but must be sought on higher planes of existence. In that case, it is in heavens beyond that we must seek our entire divine fulfilment, as the religions assert, and their other assertion of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of the perfect upon earth must be put aside as a delusion. Here we can only pursue or

attain an internal preparation or victory and, having liberated the mind and life and soul within, must turn from the unconquered and unconquerable material principle, from an unregenerated and intractable earth to find elsewhere our divine substance. There is, however, no reason why we should accept this limiting conclusion. There are, quite certainly, other states even of Matter itself; there is undoubtedly an ascending series of the divine gradations of substance; there is the possibility of the material being transfiguring itself through the acceptation of a higher law than its own which is yet its own because it is always there latent and potential in its own secrecies.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Ascending Series of Substance

> There is a self that is of the essence of Matter — there is another inner self of Life that fills the other — there is another inner self of Mind — there is another inner self of Truth-Knowledge — there is another inner self of Bliss.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[1]

> They climb Indra like a ladder. As one mounts peak after peak, there becomes clear the much that has still to be done. Indra brings consciousness of That as the goal.
>
> Like a hawk, a kite He settles on the Vessel and upbears it; in His stream of movement He discovers the Rays, for He goes bearing his weapons: He cleaves to the ocean surge of the waters; a great King, He declares the fourth status. Like a mortal purifying his body, like a war-horse galloping to the conquest of riches He pours calling through all the sheath and enters these vessels.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[2]

IF WE consider what it is that most represents to us the materiality of Matter, we shall see that it is its aspects of solidity, tangibility, increasing resistance, firm response to the touch of Sense. Substance seems more truly material and real in proportion as it presents to us a solid resistance and by virtue of that resistance a durability of sensible form on which our consciousness can dwell; in proportion as it is more subtle, less densely resistant and enduringly seizable by the sense, it appears to us less material. This attitude of our ordinary consciousness towards Matter is a symbol of the essential object for which Matter has been created. Substance passes into the material status in order that it may present to the consciousness which has to deal with it durable, firmly seizable images on which the mind can rest and base its operations and which the Life can handle with at least a relative surety of permanence in the form upon which it works. Therefore in the ancient Vedic formula Earth, type of the more solid states of substance, was accepted as the symbolic name of the material principle. Therefore, too, touch or contact is for us the essential basis of Sense; all other physical senses,

[1] II. 1-5. [2] I. 10. 1, 2; IX. 96. 19, 20.

taste, smell, hearing, sight are based upon a series of more and more subtle and indirect contacts between the percipient and the perceived. Equally, in the Sankhya classification of the five elemental states of Substance from ether to earth, we see that their characteristic is a constant progression from the more subtle to the less subtle so that at the summit we have the subtle vibrations of the ethereal and at the base the grosser density of the earthly or solid elemental condition. Matter therefore is the last stage known to us in the progress of pure substance towards a basis of cosmic relation in which the first word shall be not spirit but form, and form in its utmost possible development of concentration, resistance, durably gross image, mutual impenetrability, — the culminating point of distinction, separation and division. This is the intention and character of the material universe; it is the formula of accomplished divisibility.

And if there is, as there must be in the nature of things, an ascending series in the scale of substance from Matter to Spirit, it must be marked by a progressive diminution of these capacities most characteristic of the physical principle and a progressive increase of the opposite characteristics which will lead us to the formula of pure spiritual self-extension. This is to say that they must be marked by less and less bondage to the form, more and more subtlety and flexibility of substance and force, more and more interfusion, interpenetration, power of assimilation, power of interchange, power of variation, transmutation, unification. Drawing away from durability of form, we draw towards eternity of essence; drawing away from our poise in the persistent separation and resistance of physical Matter, we draw near to the highest divine poise in the infinity, unity and indivisibility of Spirit. Between gross substance and pure spirit substance this must be the fundamental antinomy. In Matter Chit or Conscious-Force masses itself more and more to resist and stand out against other masses of the same Conscious-Force; in substance of Spirit pure consciousness images itself freely in its sense of itself with an essential indivisibility and a constant unifying interchange as the basic formula even of the most diversifying play of its own Force. Between these

two poles there is the possibility of an infinite gradation.

These considerations become of great importance when we consider the possible relation between the divine life and the divine mind of the perfected human soul and the very gross and seemingly undivine body or formula of physical being in which we actually dwell. That formula is the result of a certain fixed relation between sense and substance from which the material universe has started. But as this relation is not the only possible relation, so that formula is not the only possible formula. Life and mind may manifest themselves in another relation to substance and work out different physical laws, other and larger habits, even a different substance of body with a freer action of the sense, a freer action of the life, a freer action of the mind. Death, division, mutual resistance and exclusion between embodied masses of the same conscious life-force are the formula of our physical existence; the narrow limitation of the play of the senses, the determination within a small circle of the field, duration and power of the life-workings, the obscuration, lame movement, broken and bounded functioning of the mind are the yoke which that formula expressed in the animal body has imposed upon the higher principles. But these things are not the sole possible rhythm of cosmic Nature. There are superior states, there are higher worlds, and if the law of these can by any progress of man and by any liberation of our substance from its present imperfections be imposed on this sensible form and instrument of our being, then there may be even here a physical working of divine mind and sense, a physical working of divine life in the human frame and even the evolution upon earth of something that we may call a divinely human body. The body of man also may some day come by its transfiguration; the Earth-Mother too may reveal in us her godhead.

Even within the formula of the physical cosmos there is an ascending series in the scale of Matter which leads us from the more to the less dense, from the less to the more subtle. Where we reach the highest term of that series, the most supra-ethereal subtlety of material substance or formulation of Force, what lies beyond? Not a Nihil, not a void; for there is no such thing as absolute void or real nullity and what we call by that

name is simply something beyond the grasp of our sense, our mind or our most subtle consciousness. Nor is it true that there is nothing beyond, or that some ethereal substance of Matter is the eternal beginning; for we know that Matter and material Force are only a last result of a pure Substance and pure Force in which consciousness is luminously self-aware and self-possessing and not as in Matter lost to itself in an inconscient sleep and an inert motion. What then is there between this material substance and that pure substance? For we do not leap from the one to the other, we do not pass at once from the inconscient to absolute consciousness. There must be and there are grades between inconscient substance and utterly self-conscious self-extension, as between the principle of Matter and the principle of Spirit.

All who have at all sounded those abysses are agreed and bear witness to this fact that there are a series of subtler and subtler formulations of substance which escape from and go beyond the formula of the material universe. Without going deeply into matters which are too occult and difficult for our present inquiry, we may say, adhering to the system on which we have based ourselves, that these gradations of substance, in one important aspect of their formulation in series, can be seen to correspond to the ascending series of Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind and that other higher divine triplicity of Sachchidananda. In other words, we find that substance in its ascension bases itself upon each of these principles and makes itself successively a characteristic vehicle for the dominating cosmic self-expression of each in their ascending series.

Here in the material world everything is founded upon the formula of material substance. Sense, Life, Thought found themselves upon what the ancients called the Earth-Power, start from it, obey its laws, accommodate their workings to this fundamental principle, limit themselves by its possibilities and, if they would develop others, have even in that development to take account of the original formula, its purpose and its demand upon the divine evolution. The sense works through physical instruments, the life through a physical nerve-system and vital organs, the mind has to build its operations upon a

corporeal basis and use a material instrumentation, even its pure mental workings have to take the data so derived as a field and as the stuff upon which it works. There is no necessity in the essential nature of mind, sense, life that they should be so limited: for the physical sense-organs are not the creators of sense-perceptions, but themselves the creation, the instruments and here a necessary convenience of the cosmic sense; the nervous system and vital organs are not the creators of life's action and reaction, but themselves the creation, the instruments and here a necessary convenience of the cosmic Life-force; the brain is not the creator of thought, but itself the creation, the instrument and here a necessary convenience of the cosmic Mind. The necessity then is not absolute, but teleological; it is the result of a divine cosmic Will in the material universe which intends to posit here a physical relation between sense and its object, establishes here a material formula and law of Conscious-Force and creates by it physical images of Conscious-Being to serve as the initial, dominating and determining fact of the world in which we live. It is not a fundamental law of being, but a constructive principle necessitated by the intention of the Spirit to evolve in a world of Matter.

In the next grade of substance the initial, dominating, determining fact is no longer substantial form and force, but life and conscious desire. Therefore the world beyond this material plane must be a world based upon a conscious cosmic vital Energy, a force of vital seeking and a force of Desire and their self-expression and not upon an inconscient or subconscient will taking the form of a material force and energy. All the forms, bodies, forces, life-movements, sense-movements, thought-movements, developments, culminations, self-fulfilments of that world must be dominated and determined by this initial fact of Conscious-Life to which Matter and Mind must subject themselves, must start from that, base themselves upon that, be limited or enlarged by its laws, powers, capacities, limitations; and if Mind there seeks to develop yet higher possibilities, still it must then too take account of the original vital formula of desire-force, its purpose and its demand upon the divine manifestation.

greater permanence in its being along with a greater potentiality, plasticity and range in its becoming. Each plateau of the hill of being gives to our widening experience a higher plane of our consciousness and a richer world for our existence.

But how does this ascending series affect the possibilities of our material existence? It would not affect them at all if each plane of consciousness, each world of existence, each grade of substance, each degree of cosmic force were cut off entirely from that which precedes and that which follows it. But the opposite is the truth; the manifestation of the Spirit is a complex weft and in the design and pattern of one principle all the others enter as elements of the spiritual whole. Our material world is the result of all the others, for the other principles have all descended into Matter to create the physical universe, and every particle of what we call Matter contains all of them implicit in itself; their secret action, as we have seen, is involved in every moment of its existence and every movement of its activity. And as Matter is the last word of the descent, so it is also the first word of the ascent; as the powers of all these planes, worlds, grades, degrees are involved in the material existence, so are they all capable of evolution out of it. It is for this reason that material being does not begin and end with gases and chemical compounds and physical forces and movements, with nebulae and suns and earths, but evolves life, evolves mind, must evolve eventually Supermind and the higher degrees of the spiritual existence. Evolution comes by the unceasing pressure of the supra-material planes on the material compelling it to deliver out of itself their principles and powers which might conceivably otherwise have slept imprisoned in the rigidity of the material formula. This would even so have been improbable, since their presence there implies a purpose of deliverance; but still this necessity from below is actually very much aided by a kindred superior pressure.

Nor can this evolution end with the first meagre formulation of life, mind, Supermind, spirit conceded to these higher powers by the reluctant power of Matter. For as they evolve, as they awake, as they become more active and avid of their own potentialities, the pressure on them of the superior planes, a pres-

sure involved in the existence and close connection and interdependence of the worlds, must also increase in insistence, power and effectiveness. Not only must these principles manifest from below in a qualified and restricted emergence, but also from above they must descend in their characteristic power and full possible efflorescence into the material being; the material creature must open to a wider and wider play of their activities in Matter, and all that is needed is a fit receptacle, medium, instrument. That is provided for in the body, life and consciousness of man.

Certainly, if that body, life and consciousness were limited to the possibilities of the gross body which are all that our physical senses and physical mentality accept, there would be a very narrow term for this evolution, and the human being could not hope to accomplish anything essentially greater than his present achievement. But this body, as ancient occult science discovered, is not the whole even of our physical being; this gross density is not all of our substance. The oldest Vedantic knowledge tells us of five degrees of our being, the material, the vital, the mental, the ideal, the spiritual or beatific and to each of these grades of our soul there corresponds a grade of our substance, a sheath as it was called in the ancient figurative language. A later psychology found that these five sheaths of our substance were the material of three bodies, gross physical, subtle and causal, in all of which the soul actually and simultaneously dwells, although here and now we are superficially conscious only of the material vehicle. But it is possible to become conscious in our other bodies as well and it is in fact the opening up of the veil between them and consequently between our physical, psychical and ideal personalities which is the cause of those "psychic" and "occult" phenomena that are now beginning to be increasingly though yet too little and too clumsily examined, even while they are far too much exploited. The old Hathayogins and Tantriks of India had long ago reduced this matter of the higher human life and body to a science. They had discovered six nervous centres of life in the dense body corresponding to six centres of life and mind faculty in the subtle, and they had found out subtle physical exercises by which these centres, now closed, could be

opened up, the higher psychical life proper to our subtle existence entered into by man, and even the physical and vital obstructions to the experience of the ideal and spiritual being could be destroyed. It is significant that one prominent result claimed by the Hathayogins for their practices and verified in many respects was a control of the physical life-force which liberated them from some of the ordinary habits or so-called laws thought by physical science to be inseparable from life in the body.

Behind all these terms of ancient psycho-physical science lies the one great fact and law of our being that whatever be its temporary poise of form, consciousness, power in this material evolution, there must be behind it and there is a greater, a truer existence of which this is only the external result and physically sensible aspect. Our substance does not end with the physical body; that is only the earthly pedestal, the terrestrial base, the material starting-point. As there are behind our waking mentality vaster ranges of consciousness subconscient and superconscient to it of which we become sometimes abnormally aware, so there are behind our gross physical being other and subtler grades of substance with a finer law and a greater power which support the denser body and which can by our entering into the ranges of consciousness belonging to them be made to impose that law and power on our dense matter and substitute their purer, higher, intenser conditions of being for the grossness and limitation of our present physical life and impulses and habits. If that be so, then the evolution of a nobler physical existence not limited by the ordinary conditions of animal birth and life and death, of difficult alimentation and facility of disorder and disease and subjection to poor and unsatisfied vital cravings ceases to have the appearance of a dream and chimera and becomes a possibility founded upon a rational and philosophic truth which is in accordance with all the rest that we have hitherto known, experienced or been able to think out about the overt and secret truth of our existence.

So it should rationally be; for the uninterrupted series of the principles of our being and their close mutual connection is too evident for it to be possible that one of them should be condemned and cut off while the others are capable of a divine libe-

ration. The ascent of man from the physical to the supramental must open out the possibility of a corresponding ascent in the grades of substance to that ideal or causal body which is proper to our supramental being, and the conquest of the lower principles by Supermind and its liberation of them into a divine life and a divine mentality must also render possible a conquest of our physical limitations by the power and principle of supramental substance. And this means the evolution not only of an untrammelled consciousness, a mind and sense not shut up in the walls of the physical ego or limited to the poor basis of knowledge given by the physical organs of sense, but a life-power liberated more and more from its mortal limitations, a physical life fit for a divine inhabitant and, — in the sense not of attachment or of restriction to our present corporeal frame but an exceeding of the law of the physical body, — the conquest of death, an earthly immortality. For from the divine Bliss, the original Delight of existence, the Lord of Immortality comes pouring the wine of that Bliss, the mystic Soma, into these jars of mentalised living matter; eternal and beautiful, he enters into these sheaths of substance for the integral transformation of the being and nature.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Sevenfold Chord of Being

> In the ignorance of my mind, I ask of these steps of the Gods that are set within. The all-knowing Gods have taken the Infant of a year and they have woven about him seven threads to make this weft.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[1]

WE HAVE now, by our scrutiny of the seven great terms of existence which the ancient seers fixed on as the foundation and sevenfold mode of all cosmic existence, discerned the gradations of evolution and involution and arrived at the basis of knowledge towards which we were striving. We have laid down that the origin, the continent, the initial and the ultimate reality of all that is in the cosmos is the triune principle of transcendent and infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss which is the nature of divine being. Consciousness has two aspects, illuminating and effective, state and power of self-awareness and state and power of self-force, by which Being possesses itself whether in its static condition or in its dynamic movement; for in its creative action it knows by omnipotent self-consciousness all that is latent within it and produces and governs the universe of its potentialities by an omniscient self-energy. This creative action of the All-Existent has its nodus in the fourth, the intermediate principle of Supermind or Real-Idea, in which a divine Knowledge one with self-existence and self-awareness and a substantial Will which is in perfect unison with that knowledge, because it is itself in its substance and nature that self-conscious self-existence dynamic in illumined action, develop infallibly the movement and form and law of things in right accordance with their self-existent Truth and in harmony with the significances of its manifestation.

The creation depends on and moves between the biune principle of unity and multiplicity; it is a manifoldness of idea and force and form which is the expression of an original unity, and it

[1] I. 164. 5.

is an eternal oneness which is the foundation and reality of the multiple worlds and makes their play possible. Supermind therefore proceeds by a double faculty of comprehensive and apprehensive knowledge; proceeding from the essential oneness to the resultant multiplicity, it comprehends all things in itself as itself the One in its manifold aspects and it apprehends separately all things in itself as objects of its will and knowledge. While to its original self-awareness all things are one being, one consciousness, one will, one self-delight and the whole movement of things a movement one and indivisible, it proceeds in its action from the unity to the multiplicity and from multiplicity to unity, creating an ordered relation between them and an appearance but not a binding reality of division, a subtle unseparating division, or rather a demarcation and determination within the indivisible. The Supermind is the divine Gnosis which creates, governs and upholds the worlds: it is the secret Wisdom which upholds both our Knowledge and our Ignorance.

We have discovered also that Mind, Life and Matter are a triple aspect of these higher principles working, so far as our universe is concerned, in subjection to the principle of Ignorance, to the superficial and apparent self-forgetfulness of the One in its play of division and multiplicity. Really, these three are only subordinate powers of the divine quaternary: Mind is a subordinate power of Supermind which takes its stand in the standpoint of division, actually forgetful here of the oneness behind though able to return to it by reillumination from the supramental; Life is similarly a subordinate power of the energy aspect of Sachchidananda, it is Force working out form and the play of conscious energy from the standpoint of division created by Mind; Matter is the form of substance of being which the existence of Sachchidananda assumes when it subjects itself to this phenomenal action of its own consciousness and force.

In addition, there is a fourth principle which comes into manifestation at the nodus of mind, life and body, that which we call the soul; but this has a double appearance, in front the desire-soul which strives for the possession and delight of things, and, behind and either largely or entirely concealed by the desire-soul, the true psychic entity which is the real repository of the expe-

riences of the spirit. And we have concluded that this fourth human principle is a projection and an action of the third divine principle of infinite Bliss, but an action in the terms of our consciousness and under the conditions of soul-evolution in this world. As the existence of the Divine is in its nature an infinite consciousness and the self-power of that consciousness, so the nature of its infinite consciousness is pure and infinite Bliss; self-possession and self-awareness are the essence of its self-delight. The cosmos also is a play of this divine self-delight and the delight of that play is entirely possessed by the Universal; but in the individual owing to the action of ignorance and division it is held back in the subliminal and the superconscient being; on our surface it lacks and has to be sought for, found and possessed by the development of the individual consciousness towards universality and transcendence.

We may, therefore, if we will, pose eight[1] principles instead of seven, and then we perceive that our existence is a sort of refraction of the divine existence, in inverted order of ascent and descent, thus ranged, —

Existence	Matter
Consciousness-Force	Life
Bliss	Psyche
Supermind	Mind.

The Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being; we ascend from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of Supermind towards the divine being. The knot of the two, the higher and the lower hemisphere[2], is where mind and Supermind meet with a veil between them. The rending of the veil is the condition of the divine life in humanity; for by that rending, by the illumining descent of the higher into the nature of the lower being and the forceful ascent of the lower being into the nature of the higher, mind can recover its divine light in the all-comprehending Supermind, the soul realise its divine self in the all-possessing all-blissful Ananda, life repossess its divine power in the play of

[1] The Vedic Seers speak of the seven Rays, but also of eight, nine, ten or twelve.

[2] *Parārdha* and *Aparārdha.*

omnipotent Conscious-Force and Matter open to its divine liberty as a form of the divine Existence. And if there be any goal to the evolution which finds here its present crown and head in the human being, other than an aimless circling and an individual escape from the circling, if the infinite potentiality of this creature, who alone here stands between Spirit and Matter with the power to mediate between them, has any meaning other than an ultimate awakening from the delusion of life by despair and disgust of the cosmic effort and its complete rejection, then even such a luminous and puissant transfiguration and emergence of the Divine in the creature must be that high-uplifted goal and that supreme significance.

But before we can turn to the psychological and practical conditions under which such a transfiguration may be changed from an essential possibility into a dynamic potentiality, we have much to consider; for we must discern not only the essential principles of the descent of Sachchidananda into cosmic existence, which we have already done, but the large plan of its order here and the nature and action of the manifested power of Conscious-Force which reigns over the conditions under which we now exist. At present, what we have first to see is that the seven or the eight principles we have examined are essential to all cosmic creation and are there, manifested or as yet unmanifested, in ourselves, in this "Infant of a year" which we still are, — for we are far yet from being the adults of evolutionary Nature. The higher Trinity is the source and basis of all existence and play of existence, and all cosmos must be an expression and action of its essential reality. No universe can be merely a form of being which has sprung up and outlined itself in an absolute nullity and void and remains standing out against a non-existent emptiness. It must be either a figure of existence within the infinite Existence who is beyond all figure or it must be itself the All-Existence. In fact, when we unify our self with cosmic being, we see that it is really both of these things at once; that is to say, it is the All-Existent figuring Himself out in an infinite series of rhythms in His own conceptive extension of Himself as Time and Space. Moreover we see that this cosmic action or any cosmic action is impossible without the play of an infinite Force of

Existence which produces and regulates all these forms and movements; and that Force equally presupposes or is the action of an infinite Consciousness, because it is in its nature a cosmic Will determining all relations and apprehending them by its own mode of awareness, and it could not so determine and apprehend them if there were no comprehensive Consciousness behind that mode of cosmic awareness to originate as well as to hold, fix and reflect through it the relations of Being in the developing formation or becoming of itself which we call a universe.

Finally, Consciousness being thus omniscient and omnipotent, in entire luminous possession of itself, and such entire luminous possession being necessarily and in its very nature Bliss, for it cannot be anything else, a vast universal self-delight must be the cause, essence and object of cosmic existence. "If there were not," says the ancient seer, "this all-encompassing ether of Delight of existence in which we dwell, if that delight were not our ether, then none could breathe, none could live." This self-bliss may become subconscient, seemingly lost on the surface, but not only must it be there at our roots, all existence must be essentially a seeking and reaching out to discover and possess it, and in proportion as the creature in the cosmos finds himself, whether in will and power or in light and knowledge or in being and wideness or in love and joy itself, he must awaken to something of the secret ecstasy. Joy of being, delight of realisation by knowledge, rapture of possession by will and power or creative force, ecstasy of union in love and joy are the highest terms of expanding life because they are the essence of existence itself in its hidden roots as on its yet unseen heights. Wherever, then, cosmic existence manifests itself, these three must be behind and within it.

But infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss need not throw themselves out into apparent being at all or, doing so, it would not be cosmic being, but simply an infinity of figures without fixed order or relation, if they did not hold or develop and bring out from themselves this fourth term of Supermind, of the divine Gnosis. There must be in every cosmos a power of Knowledge and Will which out of infinite potentiality fixes determined relations, develops the result out of the seed, rolls

out the mighty rhythms of cosmic Law and views and governs the worlds as their immortal and infinite Seer and Ruler[1]. This power indeed is nothing else than Sachchidananda Himself; it creates nothing which is not in its own self-existence, and for that reason all cosmic and real Law is a thing not imposed from outside, but from within, all development is self-development, all seed and result are seed of a Truth of things and result of that seed determined out of its potentialities. For the same reason no Law is absolute, because only the infinite is absolute, and everything contains within itself endless potentialities quite beyond its determined form and course, which are only determined through a self-limitation by Idea proceeding from an infinite liberty within. This power of self-limitation is necessarily inherent in the boundless All-Existent. The Infinite would not be the Infinite if it could not assume a manifold finiteness; the Absolute would not be the Absolute if it were denied in knowledge and power and will and manifestation of being a boundless capacity of self-determination. This Supermind then is the Truth or Real-Idea, inherent in all cosmic force and existence, which is necessary, itself remaining infinite, to determine and combine and uphold relation and order and the great lines of the manifestation. In the language of the Vedic Rishis, as infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss are the three highest and hidden Names of the Nameless, so this Supermind is the fourth Name[2] — fourth to That in its descent, fourth to us in our ascension.

But Mind, Life and Matter, the lower trilogy, are also indispensable to all cosmic being, not necessarily in the form or with the action and conditions which we know upon earth or in this material universe, but in some kind of action, however luminous, however puissant, however subtle. For Mind is essentially that faculty of Supermind which measures and limits, which fixes a particular centre and views from that the cosmic movement and its interactions. Granted that in a particular world,

[1] The Seer, the Thinker, He who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent. — *Isha Upanishad.* 8.

[2] *Turīyam svid,* "a certain Fourth", also called *turīyam dhāma,* the fourth placing or poise of existence.

plane or cosmic arrangement, mind need not be limited, or rather that the being who uses mind as a subordinate faculty need not be incapable of seeing things from other centres or standpoints or even from the real Centre of all or in the vastness of a universal self-diffusion, still if he is not capable of fixing himself normally in his own firm standpoint for certain purposes of the divine activity, if there is only the universal self-diffusion or only infinite centres without some determining or freely limiting action for each, then there is no cosmos but only a Being musing within Himself infinitely as a creator or poet may muse freely, not plastically, before he proceeds to the determining work of creation. Such a state must exist somewhere in the infinite scale of existence, but it is not what we understand by a cosmos. Whatever order there may be in it, must be a sort of unfixed, unbinding order such as Supermind might evolve before it had proceeded to the work of fixed development, measurement and interaction of relations. For that measurement and interaction Mind is necessary, though it need not be aware of itself as anything but a subordinate action of Supermind nor develop the interaction of relations on the basis of a self-imprisoned egoism such as we see active in terrestrial Nature.

Mind once existent, Life and Form of substance follow; for life is simply the determination of force and action, of relation and interaction of energy from many fixed centres of consciousness, — fixed, not necessarily in place or time, but in a persistent coexistence of beings or soul-forms of the Eternal supporting a cosmic harmony. That life may be very different from life as we know or conceive it, but essentially it would be the same principle at work which we see here figured as vitality, — the principle to which the ancient Indian thinkers gave the name of Vayu or Prana, the life-stuff, the substantial will and energy in the cosmos working out into determined form and action and conscious dynamis of being. Substance too might be very different from our view and sense of material body, much more subtle, much less rigidly binding in its law of self-division and mutual resistance, and body or form might be an instrument and not a prison, yet for the cosmic interaction some determination of form and substance would always be necessary,

even if it be only a mental body or something yet more luminous, subtle and puissantly and freely responsive than the freest mental body.

It follows that wherever Cosmos is, there, even if only one principle be initially apparent, even if at first that seem to be the sole principle of things and everything else that may appear afterwards in the world seem to be no more than its forms and results and not in themselves indispensable to cosmic existence, such a front presented by being can only be an illusory mask or appearance of its real truth. Where one principle is manifest in Cosmos, there all the rest must be not merely present and passively latent, but secretly at work. In any given world its scale and harmony of being may be openly in possession of all seven at a higher or lower degree of activity; in another they may be all involved in one which becomes the initial or fundamental principle of evolution in that world, but evolution of the involved there must be. The evolution of the sevenfold power of being, the realisation of its septuple Name, must be the destiny of any world which starts apparently from the involution of all in one power[1]. Therefore the material universe was bound in the nature of things to evolve from its hidden life apparent life, from its hidden mind apparent mind, and it must in the same nature of things evolve from its hidden Supermind apparent Supermind and from the concealed Spirit within it the triune glory of Sachchidananda. The only question is whether the earth is to be a scene of that emergence or the human creation on this or any other material scene, in this or any other cycle of the large wheelings of Time, its instrument and vehicle. The ancient seers believed in this possibility for man and held it to be his divine destiny; the modern thinker does not even conceive of it or, if he conceived, would deny or doubt. If he sees a vision of the Superman, it is in the figure of increased degrees of mentality or vitality; he admits no other emergence, sees nothing beyond these principles, for these have traced for us up till now our limit and circle. In this progressive

[1] In any given world there need not be an involution but only a subordination of the other principles to one or their inclusion in one; then evolution is not a necessity of that world-order.

world, with this human creature in whom the divine spark has been kindled, real wisdom is likely to dwell with the higher aspiration rather than with the denial of aspiration or with the hope that limits and circumscribes itself within those narrow walls of apparent possibility which are only our intermediate house of training. In the spiritual order of things, the higher we project our view and our aspiration, the greater the Truth that seeks to descend upon us, because it is already there within us and calls for its release from the covering that conceals it in manifested Nature.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Supermind, Mind and the Overmind Maya

> There is a Permanent, a Truth hidden by a Truth where the Sun unyokes his horses. The ten hundreds (of his rays) came together — That One. I saw the most glorious of the Forms of the Gods.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[1]

> The face of Truth is hidden by a golden lid; that remove, O Fostering Sun, for the Law of the Truth, for sight. O Sun, O sole Seer, marshal thy rays, gather them together, — let me see of thee thy happiest form of all; that Conscious Being everywhere, He am I.
>
> *Isha Upanishad.*[2]

> The Truth, the Right, the Vast.
>
> *Atharva Veda.*[3]

> It became both truth and falsehood. It became the Truth, even all this that is.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[4]

ONE point remains to be cleared which we have till now left in obscurity, the process of the lapse into the Ignorance; for we have seen that nothing in the original nature of Mind, Life or Matter necessitates a fall from Knowledge. It has been shown indeed that division of consciousness is the basis of the Ignorance, a division of individual consciousness from the cosmic and the transcendent of which yet it is an intimate part, in essence inseparable, a division of Mind from the supramental Truth of which it should be a subordinate action, of Life from the original Force of which it is one energism, of Matter from the original Existence of which it is one form of substance. But it has still to be made clear how this division came about in the Indivisible, by what peculiar self-diminishing or self-effacing action of Consciousness-Force in the Being: for since all is a movement of that Force, only by some such action obscuring its own plenary light and power can there have arisen the dynamic and effective phenomenon of the Ignorance. But this problem can be left over to be treated in a more close

[1] V. 62. 1. [2] Verses 15, 16. [3] XII. 1. 1. [4] II. 6.

examination of the dual phenomenon of Knowledge-Ignorance which makes our consciousness a blend of light and darkness, a half-light between the full day of the supramental Truth and the night of the material Inconscience. All that is necessary to note at present is that it must be in its essential character an exclusive concentration on one movement and status of Conscious Being, which puts all the rest of consciousness and being behind and veils it from that one movement's now partial knowledge.

Still there is one aspect of this problem which must be immediately considered; it is the gulf created between Mind as we know it and the supramental Truth-Consciousness of which we have found Mind in its origin to be a subordinate process. For this gulf is considerable and, if there are no gradations between the two levels of consciousness, a transition from one to the other, either in the descending involution of Spirit into Matter or the corresponding evolution in Matter of the concealed grades leading back to the Spirit, seems in the highest degree improbable, if not impossible. For Mind as we know it is a power of the Ignorance seeking for Truth, groping with difficulty to find it, reaching only mental constructions and representations of it in word and idea, in mind formations, sense formations, — as if bright or shadowy photographs or films of a distant Reality were all that it could achieve. Supermind, on the contrary, is in actual and natural possession of the Truth and its formations are forms of the Reality, not constructions, representations or indicative figures. No doubt, the evolving Mind in us is hampered by its encasement in the obscurity of this life and body, and the original Mind principle in the involutionary descent is a thing of greater power to which we have not fully reached, able to act with freedom in its own sphere or province, to build more revelatory constructions, more minutely inspired formations, more subtle and significant embodiments in which the light of Truth is present and palpable. But still that too is not likely to be essentially different in its characteristic action, for it too is a movement into the Ignorance, not a still unseparated portion of the Truth-Consciousness. There must be somewhere in the descending and

ascending scale of Being an intermediate power and plane of consciousness, perhaps something more than that, something with an original creative force, through which the involutionary transition from Mind in the Knowledge to Mind in the Ignorance was effected and through which again the evolutionary reverse transition becomes intelligible and possible. For the involutionary transition this intervention is a logical imperative, for the evolutionary it is a practical necessity. For in the evolution there are indeed radical transitions, from indeterminate Energy to organised Matter, from inanimate Matter to Life, from a subconscious or submental to a perceptive and feeling and acting Life, from primitive animal mentality to conceptive reasoning Mind observing and governing Life and observing itself also, able to act as an independent entity and even to seek consciously for self-transcendence; but these leaps, even when considerable, are to some extent prepared by slow gradations which make them conceivable and feasible. There can be no such immense hiatus as seems to exist between supramental Truth-Consciousness and the Mind in the Ignorance.

But if such intervening gradations exist, it is clear that they must be superconscient to human mind which does not seem to have in its normal state any entry into these higher grades of being. Man is limited in his consciousness by mind and even by a given range or scale of mind: what is below his mind, submental or mental but nether to his scale, readily seems to him subconscious or not distinguishable from complete inconscience; what is above it is to him superconscious and he is almost inclined to regard it as void of awareness, a sort of luminous Inconscience. Just as he is limited to a certain scale of sounds or of colours and what is above or below that scale is to him inaudible and invisible or at least indistinguishable, so is it with his scale of mental consciousness, confined at either extremity by an incapacity which marks his upper and his nether limit. He has no sufficient means of communication even with the animal who is his mental congener, though not his equal, and he is even capable of denying mind or real consciousness to it because its modes are other and narrower than those with which in himself and his kind he is familiar; he can observe sub-

mental being from outside but cannot at all communicate with it or enter intimately into its nature. Equally the superconscious is to him a closed book which may well be filled only with empty pages. At first sight, then, it would appear as if he had no means of contact with these higher gradations of consciousness: if so, they cannot act as links or bridges and his evolution must cease with his accomplished mental range and cannot exceed it; Nature in drawing these limits has written finis to his upward endeavour.

But when we look more closely, we perceive that this normality is deceptive and that in fact there are several directions in which human mind reaches beyond itself, tends towards self-exceeding; these are precisely the necessary lines of contact or veiled or half-veiled passages which connect it with higher grades of consciousness of the self-manifesting Spirit. First, we have noted the place Intuition occupies in the human means of knowledge, and Intuition is in its very nature a projection of the characteristic action of these higher grades into the mind of Ignorance. It is true that in human mind its action is largely hidden by the interventions of our normal intelligence; a pure intuition is a rare occurrence in our mental activity: for what we call by the name is usually a point of direct knowledge which is immediately caught and coated over with mental stuff, so that it serves only as an invisible or a very tiny nucleus of a crystallisation which is in its mass intellectual or otherwise mental in character; or else the flash of intuition is quickly replaced or intercepted, before it has a chance of manifesting itself, by a rapid imitative mental movement, insight or quick perception or some swift-leaping process of thought which owes its appearance to the stimulus of the coming intuition but obstructs its entry or covers it with a substituted mental suggestion true or erroneous but in either case not the authentic intuitive movement. Nevertheless, the fact of this intervention from above, the fact that behind all our original thinking or authentic perception of things there is a veiled, a half-veiled or a swift unveiled intuitive element is enough to establish a connection between mind and what is above it; it opens a passage of communication and of entry into the superior spirit-ranges. There is also the reaching out of mind

to exceed the personal ego limitation, to see things in a certain impersonality and universality. Impersonality is the first character of cosmic self; universality, non-limitation by the single or limiting point of view, is the character of cosmic perception and knowledge: this tendency is therefore a widening, however rudimentary, of these restricted mind areas towards cosmicity, towards a quality which is the very character of the higher mental planes, — towards that superconscient cosmic Mind which, we have suggested, must in the nature of things be the original mind-action of which ours is only a derivative and inferior process. Again, there is not an entire absence of penetration from above into our mental limits. The phenomena of genius are really the result of such a penetration, — veiled, no doubt, because the light of the superior consciousness not only acts within narrow limits, usually in a special field, without any regulated separate organisation of its characteristic energies, often indeed quite fitfully, erratically and with a supernormal or abnormal irresponsible governance, but also in entering the mind it subdues and adapts itself to mind substance so that it is only a modified or diminished dynamis that reaches us, not all the original divine luminosity of what might be called the overhead consciousness beyond us. Still the phenomena of inspiration, of revelatory vision or of intuitive perception and intuitive discernment, surpassing our less illumined or less powerful normal mind-action, are there and their origin is unmistakable. Finally, there is the vast and multitudinous field of mystic and spiritual experience, and here the gates already lie wide open to the possibility of extending our consciousness beyond its present limits, — unless, indeed, by an obscurantism that refuses to inquire or an attachment to our boundaries of mental normality we shut them or turn away from the vistas they open before us. But in our present investigation we cannot afford to neglect the possibilities which these domains of mankind's endeavour bring near to us, or the added knowledge of oneself and of the veiled Reality which is their gift to human mind, the greater light which arms them with the right to act upon us and is the innate power of their existence.

There are two successive movements of consciousness, difficult but well within our capacity, by which we can have access to

the superior gradations of our conscious existence. There is first a movement inward by which, instead of living in our surface mind, we break the wall between our external and our now subliminal self; this can be brought about by a gradual effort and discipline or by a vehement transition, sometimes a forceful involuntary rupture, — the latter by no means safe for the limited human mind accustomed to live securely only within its normal limits, — but in either way, safe or unsafe, the thing can be done. What we discover within this secret part of ourselves is an inner being, a soul, an inner mind, an inner life, an inner subtle-physical entity which is much larger in its potentialities, more plastic, more powerful, more capable of a manifold knowledge and dynamism than our surface mind, life or body; especially, it is capable of a direct communication with the universal forces, movements, objects of the cosmos, a direct feeling and opening to them, a direct action on them and even a widening of itself beyond the limits of the personal mind, the personal life, the body, so that it feels itself more and more a universal being no longer limited by the existing walls of our too narrow mental, vital, physical existence. This widening can extend itself to a complete entry into the consciousness of cosmic Mind, into unity with the universal Life, even into a oneness with universal Matter. That, however, is still an identification either with a diminished cosmic truth or with the cosmic Ignorance.

But once this entry into the inner being is accomplished, the inner Self is found to be capable of an opening, an ascent upwards into things beyond our present mental level; that is the second spiritual possibility in us. The first most ordinary result is a discovery of a vast static and silent Self which we feel to be our real or our basic existence, the foundation of all else that we are. There may be even an extinction, a Nirvana both of our active being and of the sense of self into a Reality that is indefinable and inexpressible. But also we can realise that this self is not only our own spiritual being but the true self of all others; it presents itself then as the underlying truth of cosmic existence. It is possible to remain in a Nirvana of all individuality, to stop at a static realisation or, regarding the cosmic movement as a superficial play or illusion imposed on the silent Self, to pass into

some supreme immobile and immutable status beyond the universe. But another less negative line of supernormal experience also offers itself; for there takes place a large dynamic descent of light, knowledge, power, bliss or other supernormal energies into our self of silence, and we can ascend too into higher regions of the Spirit where its immobile status is the foundation of those great and luminous energies. It is evident in either case that we have risen beyond the mind of Ignorance into a spiritual state; but, in the dynamic movement, the resultant greater action of Consciousness-Force may present itself either simply as a pure spiritual dynamis not otherwise determinate in its character or it may reveal a spiritual mind-range where mind is no longer ignorant of the Reality, — not yet a supermind level, but deriving from the supramental Truth-Consciousness and still luminous with something of its knowledge.

It is in the latter alternative that we find the secret we are seeking, the means of the transition, the needed step towards a supramental transformation; for we perceive a graduality of ascent, a communication with a more and more deep and immense light and power from above, a scale of intensities which can be regarded as so many stairs in the ascension of Mind or in a descent into Mind from That which is beyond it. We are aware of a sealike downpour of masses of a spontaneous knowledge which assumes the nature of Thought but has a different character from the process of thought to which we are accustomed; for there is nothing here of seeking, no trace of mental construction, no labour of speculation or difficult discovery; it is an automatic and spontaneous knowledge from a Higher Mind that seems to be in possession of Truth and not in search of hidden and withheld realities. One observes that this Thought is much more capable than the mind of including at once a mass of knowledge in a single view; it has a cosmic character, not the stamp of an individual thinking. Beyond this Truth-Thought we can distinguish a greater illumination instinct with an increased power and intensity and driving force, a luminosity of the nature of Truth-Sight with thought formulation as a minor and dependent activity. If we accept the Vedic image of the Sun of Truth, — an image which in this experience becomes a reality,

— we may compare the action of the Higher Mind to a composed and steady sunshine, the energy of the Illumined Mind beyond it to an outpouring of massive lightnings of flaming sun-stuff. Still beyond can be met a yet greater power of the Truth-Force, an intimate and exact Truth-vision, Truth-thought, Truth-sense, Truth-feeling, Truth-action, to which we can give in a special sense the name of Intuition; for though we have applied that word for want of a better to any supra-intellectual direct way of knowing, yet what we actually know as intuition is only one special movement of self-existent knowledge. This new range is its origin; it imparts to our intuitions something of its own distinct character and is very clearly an intermediary of a greater Truth-Light with which our mind cannot directly communicate. At the source of this Intuition we discover a superconscient cosmic Mind in direct contact with the supramental Truth-Consciousness, an original intensity determinant of all movements below it and all mental energies, — not Mind as we know it, but an Overmind that covers as with the wide wings of some creative Oversoul this whole lower hemisphere of Knowledge-Ignorance, links it with that greater Truth-Consciousness while yet at the same time with its brilliant golden Lid it veils the face of the greater Truth from our sight, intervening with its flood of infinite possibilities as at once an obstacle and a passage in our seeking of the spiritual law of our existence, its highest aim, its secret Reality. This then is the occult link we were looking for; this is the Power that at once connects and divides the supreme Knowledge and the cosmic Ignorance.

In its nature and law the Overmind is a delegate of the Supermind Consciousness, its delegate to the Ignorance. Or we might speak of it as a protective double, a screen of dissimilar similarity through which Supermind can act indirectly on an Ignorance whose darkness could not bear or receive the direct impact of a supreme Light. Even, it is by the projection of this luminous Overmind corona that the diffusion of a diminished light in the Ignorance and the throwing of that contrary shadow which swallows up in itself all light, the Inconscience, became at all possible. For Supermind transmits to Overmind all its realities, but leaves it to formulate them in a movement and according to

an awareness of things which is still a vision of Truth and yet at the same time a first parent of the Ignorance. A line divides Supermind and Overmind which permits a free transmission, allows the lower Power to derive from the higher Power all it holds or sees, but automatically compels a transitional change in the passage. The integrality of the Supermind keeps always the essential truth of things, the total truth and the truth of its individual self-determinations clearly knit together; it maintains in them an inseparable unity and between them a close interpenetration and a free and full consciousness of each other: but in Overmind this integrality is no longer there. And yet the Overmind is well aware of the essential Truth of things; it embraces the totality; it uses the individual self-determinations without being limited by them: but although it knows their oneness, can realise it in a spiritual cognition, yet its dynamic movement, even while relying on that for its security, is not directly determined by it. Overmind Energy proceeds through an illimitable capacity of separation and combination of the powers and aspects of the integral and indivisible all-comprehending Unity. It takes each Aspect or Power and gives to it an independent action in which it acquires a full separate importance and is able to work out, we might say, its own world of creation. Purusha and Prakriti, Conscious Soul and executive Force of Nature, are in the supramental harmony a two-aspected single truth, being and dynamis of the Reality; there can be no disequilibrium or predominance of one over the other. In Overmind we have the origin of the cleavage, the trenchant distinction made by the philosophy of the Sankhyas in which they appear as two independent entities, Prakriti able to dominate Purusha and cloud its freedom and power, reducing it to a witness and recipient of her forms and actions, Purusha able to return to its separate existence and abide in a free self-sovereignty by rejection of her original overclouding material principle. So with the other aspects or powers of the Divine Reality, One and Many, Divine Personality and Divine Impersonality, and the rest; each is still an aspect and power of the one Reality, but each is empowered to act as an independent entity in the whole, arrive at the fullness of the possibilities of its separate expression and develop the dynamic

consequences of that separateness. At the same time in Overmind this separateness is still founded on the basis of an implicit underlying unity; all possibilities of combination and relation between the separated Powers and Aspects, all interchanges and mutualities of their energies are freely organised and their actuality always possible.

If we regard the Powers of the Reality as so many Godheads, we can say that the Overmind releases a million Godheads into action, each empowered to create its own world, each world capable of relation, communication and interplay with the others. There are in the Veda different formulations of the nature of the Gods: it is said they are all one Existence to which the sages give different names; yet each God is worshipped as if he by himself is that Existence, one who is all the other Gods together or contains them in his being; and yet again each is a separate Deity acting sometimes in unison with companion deities, sometimes separately, sometimes even in apparent opposition to other Godheads of the same Existence. In the Supermind all this would be held together as a harmonised play of the one Existence; in the Overmind each of these three conditions could be a separate action or basis of action and have its own principle of development and consequences and yet each keep the power to combine with the others in a more composite harmony. As with the One Existence, so with its Consciousness and Force. The One Consciousness is separated into many independent forms of consciousness and knowledge; each follows out its own line of truth which it has to realise. The one total and many-sided Real-Idea is split up into its many sides; each becomes an independent Idea-Force with the power to realise itself. The one Consciousness-Force is liberated into its million forces, and each of these forces has the right to fulfil itself or to assume, if needed, a hegemony and take up for its own utility the other forces. So too the Delight of Existence is loosed out into all manner of delights and each can carry in itself its independent fullness or sovereign extreme. Overmind thus gives to the One Existence-Consciousness-Bliss the character of a teeming of infinite possibilities which can be developed into a multitude of worlds or thrown together into one world in which the endlessly variable

outcome of their play is the determinant of the creation, of its process, its course and its consequence.

Since the Consciousness-Force of the eternal Existence is the universal creatrix, the nature of a given world will depend on whatever self-formulation of that Consciousness expresses itself in that world. Equally, for each individual being, his seeing or representation to himself of the world he lives in will depend on the poise or make which that Consciousness has assumed in him. Our human mental consciousness sees the world in sections cut by the reason and sense and put together in a formation which is also sectional; the house it builds is planned to accommodate one or another generalised formulation of Truth, but excludes the rest or admits some only as guests or dependents in the house. Overmind Consciousness is global in its cognition and can hold any number of seemingly fundamental differences together in a reconciling vision. Thus the mental reason sees Person and the Impersonal as opposites: it conceives an impersonal Existence in which person and personality are fictions of the Ignorance or temporary constructions; or, on the contrary, it can see Person as the primary reality and the impersonal as a mental abstraction or only stuff or means of manifestation. To the Overmind intelligence these are separable Powers of the one Existence which can pursue their independent self-affirmation and can also unite together their different modes of action, creating both in their independence and in their union different states of consciousness and being which can be all of them valid and all capable of coexistence. A purely impersonal existence and consciousness is true and possible, but also an entirely personal consciousness and existence; the Impersonal Divine, Nirguna Brahman, and the Personal Divine, Saguna Brahman, are here equal and coexistent aspects of the Eternal. Impersonality can manifest with person subordinated to it as a mode of expression; but, equally, Person can be the reality with impersonality as a mode of its nature: both aspects of manifestation face each other in the infinite variety of conscious Existence. What to the mental reason are irreconcilable differences present themselves to the Overmind intelligence as coexistent correlatives; what to the mental reason are contraries are to the Overmind intelli-

gence complementaries. Our mind sees that all things are born from Matter or material Energy, exist by it, go back into it; it concludes that Matter is the eternal factor, the primary and ultimate reality, Brahman. Or it sees all as born of Life-Force or Mind, existing by Life or by Mind, going back into the universal Life or Mind, and it concludes that this world is a creation of the cosmic Life-Force or of a cosmic Mind or Logos. Or again it sees the world and all things as born of, existing by and going back to the Real-Idea or Knowledge-Will of the Spirit or to the Spirit itself and it concludes on an idealistic or spiritual view of the universe. It can fix on any of these ways of seeing, but to its normal separative vision each way excludes the others. Overmind consciousness perceives that each view is true of the action of the principle it erects; it can see that there is a material world-formula, a vital world-formula, a mental world-formula, a spiritual world-formula, and each can predominate in a world of its own and at the same time all can combine in one world as its constituent powers. The self-formulation of Conscious Force on which our world is based as an apparent Inconscience that conceals in itself a supreme Conscious-Existence and holds all the powers of Being together in its inconscient secrecy, a world of universal Matter realising in itself Life, Mind, Overmind, Supermind, Spirit, each of them in its turn taking up the others as means of its self-expression, Matter proving in the spiritual vision to have been always itself a manifestation of the Spirit, is to the Overmind view a normal and easily realisable creation. In its power of origination and in the process of its executive dynamis Overmind is an organiser of many potentialities of Existence, each affirming its separate reality but all capable of linking themselves together in many different but simultaneous ways, a magician craftsman empowered to weave the multicoloured warp and woof of manifestation of a single entity in a complex universe.

In this simultaneous development of multitudinous independent or combined Powers or Potentials there is yet — or there is as yet — no chaos, no conflict, no fall from Truth or Knowledge. The Overmind is a creator of truths, not of illusions or falsehoods: what is worked out in any given over-

mental energism or movement is the truth of the Aspect, Power, Idea, Force, Delight which is liberated into independent action, the truth of the consequences of its reality in that independence. There is no exclusiveness asserting each as the sole truth of being or the others as inferior truths: each God knows all the Gods and their place in existence; each Idea admits all other ideas and their right to be; each Force concedes a place to all other forces and their truth and consequences; no delight of separate fulfilled existence or separate experience denies or condemns the delight of other existence or other experience. The Overmind is a principle of cosmic Truth and a vast and endless catholicity is its very spirit; its energy is an all-dynamism as well as a principle of separate dynamisms: it is a sort of inferior Supermind, — although it is concerned predominantly not with absolutes, but with what might be called the dynamic potentials or pragmatic truths of Reality, or with absolutes mainly for their power of generating pragmatic or creative values, although, too, its comprehension of things is more global than integral, since its totality is built up of global wholes or constituted by separate independent realities uniting or coalescing together, and although the essential unity is grasped by it and felt to be basic of things and pervasive in their manifestation, but no longer as in the Supermind their intimate and ever-present secret, their dominating continent, the overt constant builder of the harmonic whole of their activity and nature.

If we would understand the difference of this global Overmind Consciousness from our separative and only imperfectly synthetic mental consciousness, we may come near to it if we compare the strictly mental with what would be an overmental view of activities in our material universe. To the Overmind, for example, all religions would be true as developments of the one eternal religion, all philosophies would be valid each in its own field as a statement of its own universe-view from its own angle, all political theories with their practice would be the legitimate working out of an Idea Force with its right to application and practical development in the play of the energies of Nature. In our separative consciousness, imperfectly visited by glimpses of catholicity and universality, these things exist as opposites;

each claims to be the truth and taxes the others with error and falsehood, each feels impelled to refute or destroy the others in order that itself alone may be the Truth and live: at best, each must claim to be superior, admit all others only as inferior truth-expressions. An overmental Intelligence would refuse to entertain this conception or this drift to exclusiveness for a moment; it would allow all to live as necessary to the whole or put each in its place in the whole or assign to each its field of realisation or of endeavour. This is because in us consciousness has come down completely into the divisions of the Ignorance; Truth is no longer either an Infinite or a cosmic whole with many possible formulations, but a rigid affirmation holding any other affirmation to be false because different from itself and entrenched in other limits. Our mental consciousness can indeed arrive in its cognition at a considerable approach towards a total comprehensiveness and catholicity, but to organise that in action and life seems to be beyond its power. Evolutionary Mind, manifest in individuals or collectivities, throws up a multiplicity of divergent viewpoints, divergent lines of action and lets them work themselves out side by side or in collision or in a certain intermixture; it can make selective harmonies, but it cannot arrive at the harmonic control of a true totality. Cosmic Mind must have even in the evolutionary Ignorance, like all totalities, such a harmony, if only of arranged accords and discords; there is too in it an underlying dynamism of oneness: but it carries the completeness of these things in its depths, perhaps in a supermind-overmind substratum, but does not impart it to individual Mind in the evolution, does not bring it or has not yet brought it from the depths to the surface. An Overmind world would be a world of harmony; the world of Ignorance in which we live is a world of disharmony and struggle.

And still we can recognise at once in the Overmind the original cosmic Maya, not a Maya of Ignorance but a Maya of Knowledge, yet a Power which has made the Ignorance possible, even inevitable. For if each principle loosed into action must follow its independent line and carry out its complete consequences, the principle of separation must also be allowed its complete course and arrive at its absolute consequence; this is

the inevitable descent, *facilis descensus*, which Consciousness, once it admits the separative principle, follows till it enters by obscuring infinitesimal fragmentation, *tucchyena*[1], into the material Inconscience, — the Inconscient Ocean of the Rig Veda, — and if the One is born from that by its own greatness, it is still at first concealed by a fragmentary separative existence and consciousness which is ours and in which we have to piece things together to arrive at a whole. In that slow and difficult emergence a certain semblance of truth is given to the dictum of Heraclitus that War is the father of all things; for each idea, force, separate consciousness, living being by the very necessity of its ignorance enters into collision with others and tries to live and grow and fulfil itself by independent self-assertion, not by harmony with the rest of existence. Yet there is still the unknown underlying Oneness which compels us to strive slowly towards some form of harmony, of interdependence, of concording of discords, of a difficult unity. But it is only by the evolution in us of the concealed superconscient powers of cosmic Truth and of the Reality in which they are one that the harmony and unity we strive for can be dynamically realised in the very fibre of our being and all its self-expression and not merely in imperfect attempts, incomplete constructions, ever-changing approximations. The higher ranges of spiritual Mind have to open upon our being and consciousness and also that which is beyond even spiritual Mind must appear in us if we are to fulfil the divine possibility of our birth into cosmic existence.

Overmind in its descent reaches a line which divides the cosmic Truth from the cosmic Ignorance; it is the line at which it becomes possible for Consciousness-Force, emphasising the separateness of each independent movement created by Overmind and hiding or darkening their unity, to divide Mind by an exclusive concentration from the overmental source. There has already been a similar separation of Overmind from its supramental source, but with a transparency in the veil which allows a conscious transmission and maintains a certain luminous kinship; but here the veil is opaque and the transmission of the Overmind motives to the Mind is occult and obscure. Mind

[1] *Rig Veda*, X. 129. 3.

separated acts as if it were an independent principle, and each mental being, each basic mental idea, power, force stands similarly on its separate self; if it communicates with or combines or contacts others, it is not with the catholic universality of the overmind movement, on a basis of underlying oneness, but as independent units joining to form a separate constructed whole. It is by this movement that we pass from the cosmic Truth into the cosmic Ignorance. The cosmic Mind on this level, no doubt, comprehends its own unity, but it is not aware of its own source and foundation in the Spirit or can only comprehend it by the intelligence, not in any enduring experience; it acts in itself as if by its own right and works out what it receives as material without direct communication with the source from which it receives it. Its units also act in ignorance of each other and of the cosmic whole except for the knowledge that they can get by contact and communication, — the basic sense of identity and the mutual penetration and understanding that comes from it are no longer there. All the actions of this Mind Energy proceed on the opposite basis of the Ignorance and its divisions and, although they are the results of a certain conscious knowledge, it is a partial knowledge, not a true and integral self-knowledge, nor a true and integral world-knowledge. This character persists in Life and in subtle Matter and reappears in the gross material universe which arises from the final lapse into the Inconscience.

Yet, as in our subliminal or inner Mind, so in this Mind also a larger power of communication and mutuality still remains, a freer play of mentality and sense than human mind possesses, and the Ignorance is not complete; a conscious harmony, an interdependent organisation of right relations is more possible: mind is not yet perturbed by blind Life forces or obscured by irresponsive Matter. It is a plane of Ignorance, but not yet of falsehood or error, — or at least the lapse into falsehood and error is not yet inevitable; this Ignorance is limitative but not necessarily falsificative. There is limitation of knowledge, an organisation of partial truths, but not a denial or opposite of truth or knowledge. This character of an organisation of partial truths on a basis of separative knowledge persists in Life and

subtle Matter, for the exclusive concentration of Consciousness-Force which puts them into separative action does not entirely sever or veil Mind from Life or Mind and Life from Matter. The complete separation can take place only when the stage of Inconscience has been reached and our world of manifold Ignorance arises out of that tenebrous matrix. These other still conscient stages of the involution are indeed organisations of Conscious Force in which each lives from his own centre, follows out his own possibilities, and the predominant principle itself, whether Mind, Life or Matter, works out things on its own independent basis; but what is worked out are truths of itself, not illusions or a tangle of truth and falsehood, knowledge and ignorance. But when by an exclusive concentration on Force and Form Consciousness-Force seems phenomenally to separate Consciousness from Force, or when it absorbs Consciousness in a blind sleep lost in Form and Force, then Consciousness has to struggle back to itself by a fragmentary evolution which necessitates error and makes falsehood inevitable. Nevertheless, these things too are not illusions that have sprung out of an original Non-Existence; they are, we might say, the unavoidable truths of a world born out of Inconscience. For the Ignorance is still in reality a knowledge seeking for itself behind the original mask of Inconscience; it misses and finds; its results, natural and even inevitable on their own line, are the true consequence of the lapse, — in a way, even, the right working of the recovery from the lapse. Existence plunging into an apparent Non-Existence, Consciousness into an apparent Inconscience, Delight of existence into a vast cosmic insensibility are the first result of the fall and, in the return from it by a struggling fragmentary experience, the rendering of Consciousness into the dual terms of truth and falsehood, knowledge and error, of Existence into the dual terms of life and death, of Delight of existence into the dual terms of pain and pleasure are the necessary process of the labour of self-discovery. A pure experience of Truth, Knowledge, Delight, imperishable existence would here be itself a contradiction of the truth of things. It could only be otherwise if all beings in the evolution were quiescently responsive to the psychic elements within them and to the Supermind underlying Nature's opera-

tions; but here there comes in the Overmind law of each Force working out its own possibilities. The natural possibilities of a world in which an original Inconscience and a division of consciousness are the main principles, would be the emergence of Forces of Darkness impelled to maintain the Ignorance by which they live, an ignorant struggle to know originative of falsehood and error, an ignorant struggle to live engendering wrong and evil, an egoistic struggle to enjoy, parent of fragmentary joys and pains and sufferings; these are therefore the inevitable first-imprinted characters, though not the sole possibilities of our evolutionary existence. Still, because the Non-Existence is a concealed Existence, the Inconscience a concealed Consciousness, the insensibility a masked and dormant Ananda, these secret realities must emerge; the hidden Overmind and Supermind too must in the end fulfil themselves in this apparently opposite organisation from a dark Infinite.

Two things render that culmination more facile than it would otherwise be. Overmind in the descent towards material creation has originated modifications of itself, — Intuition especially with its penetrative lightning flashes of truth lighting up local points and stretches of country in our consciousness, — which can bring the concealed truth of things nearer to our comprehension, and, by opening ourselves more widely first in the inner being and then as a result in the outer surface self also to the messages of these higher ranges of consciousness, by growing into them, we can become ourselves also intuitive and overmental beings, not limited by the intellect and sense, but capable of a more universal comprehension and a direct touch of truth in its very self and body. In fact flashes of enlightenment from these higher ranges already come to us, but this intervention is mostly fragmentary, casual or partial; we have still to begin to enlarge ourselves into their likeness and organise in us the greater Truth activities of which we are potentially capable. But, secondly, Intuition, Overmind, even Supermind not only must be, as we have seen, principles inherent and involved in the Inconscience from which we arise in the evolution and inevitably destined to evolve, but are secretly present, occult actively with flashes of intuitive emergence in the cosmic activity of Mind, Life and

Matter. It is true that their action is concealed and, even when they emerge, it is modified by the medium, material, vital, mental in which they work and not easily recognisable. Supermind cannot manifest itself as the Creator Power in the universe from the beginning, for if it did, the Ignorance and Inconscience would be impossible or else the slow evolution necessary would change into a rapid transformation scene. Yet at every step of the material energy we can see the stamp of inevitability given by a supramental creator, in all the development of life and mind the play of the lines of possibility and their combination which is the stamp of Overmind intervention. As Life and Mind have been released in Matter, so too must in their time these greater powers of the concealed Godhead emerge from the involution and their supreme Light descend into us from above.

A divine Life in the manifestation is then not only possible as the high result and ransom of our present life in the Ignorance but, if these things are as we have seen them, it is the inevitable outcome and consummation of Nature's evolutionary endeavour.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK

BOOK II

THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE IGNORANCE —THE SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

PART I

THE INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE IGNORANCE

CHAPTER I

Indeterminates, Cosmic Determinations and the Indeterminable

> The Unseen with whom there can be no pragmatic relations, unseizable, featureless, unthinkable, undesignable by name, whose substance is the certitude of One Self, in whom world-existence is stilled, who is all peace and bliss — that is the Self, that is what must be known.
>
> *Mandukya Upanishad.*[1]

> One sees it as a mystery or one speaks of it or hears of it as a mystery, but none knows it.
>
> *Gita.*[2]

> When men seek after the Immutable, the Indeterminable, the Unmanifest, the All-Pervading, the Unthinkable, the Summit Self, the Immobile, the Permanent, — equal in mind to all, intent on the good of all beings, it is to Me that they come.
>
> *Gita.*[3]

> High beyond the Intelligence is the Great Self, beyond the Great Self is the Unmanifest, beyond the Unmanifest is the Conscious Being. There is nothing beyond the Being, — that is the extreme ultimate, that the supreme goal.
>
> *Katha Upanishad.*[4]

> Rare is the great of soul to whom all is the Divine Being.
>
> *Gita.*[5]

A CONSCIOUSNESS-FORCE, everywhere inherent in Existence, acting even when concealed, is the creator of the worlds, the occult secret of Nature. But in our material world and in our own being consciousness has a double aspect; there is a force of Knowledge, there is a force of Ignorance. In the infinite consciousness of a self-aware infinite Existence knowledge must be everywhere implicit or operative in the very grain of its action; but we see here at the beginning of things, apparent as the base or the nature of the creative world-energy, an Inconscience, a total Nescience. This is the stock with which the material universe commences: consciousness and knowledge emerge at

[1] Verse 7. [2] II. 29. [3] XII. 3, 4. [4] III. 10, 11. [5] *vāsudevaḥ sarvamiti...* VII. 19.

first in obscure infinitesimal movements, at points, in little quanta which associate themselves together; there is a tardy and difficult evolution, a slowly increasing organisation and ameliorated mechanism of the workings of consciousness, more and more gains are written on the blank slate of the Nescience. But still these have the appearance of gathered acquisitions and constructions of a seeking Ignorance which tries to know, to understand, to discover, to change slowly and strugglingly into knowledge. As Life here establishes and maintains its operations with difficulty on a foundation and in an environment of general Death, first in infinitesimal points of life, in quanta of life-form and life-energy, in increasing aggregates that create more and more complex organisms, an intricate life-machinery, Consciousness also establishes and maintains a growing but precarious light in the darkness of an original Nescience and a universal Ignorance.

Moreover the knowledge gained is of phenomena, not of the reality of things or of the foundations of existence. Wherever our consciousness meets what seems to be a foundation, that foundation wears the appearance of a blank, — when it is not a void, — an original state which is featureless and a multitude of consequences which are not inherent in the origin and which nothing in it seems to justify or visibly to necessitate; there is a mass of superstructure which has no clear native relation to the fundamental existence. The first aspect of cosmic existence is an Infinite which is to our perception an indeterminate, if not indeterminable. In this Infinite the universe itself, whether in its aspect of Energy or its aspect of structure, appears as an indeterminate determination, a "boundless finite", — paradoxical but necessary expressions which would seem to indicate that we are face to face with a suprarational mystery as the base of things; in that universe arise — from where? — a vast number and variety of general and particular determinates which do not appear to be warranted by anything perceptible in the nature of the Infinite, but seem to be imposed, — or, it may be, self-imposed, — upon it. We give to the Energy which produces them the name of Nature, but the word conveys no meaning unless it is that the nature of things is what it is by virtue of a Force which arranges

them according to an inherent Truth in them; but the nature of that Truth itself, the reason why these determinates are what they are is nowhere visible. It has been possible indeed for human Science to detect the process or many processes of material things, but this knowledge does not throw any light on the major question; we do not know even the rationale of the original cosmic processes, for the results do not present themselves as their necessary but only their pragmatic and actual consequence. In the end we do not know how these determinates came into or out of the original Indeterminate or Indeterminable on which they stand forth as on a blank and flat background in the riddle of their ordered occurrence. At the origin of things we are faced with an Infinite containing a mass of unexplained finites, an Indivisible full of endless divisions, an Immutable teeming with mutations and differentiae. A cosmic paradox is the beginning of all things, a paradox without any key to its significance.

It is possible indeed to question the need of positing an Infinite which contains our formed universe, although this conception is imperatively demanded by our mind as a necessary basis to its conceptions, — for it is unable to fix or assign a limit whether in Space or Time or essential existence beyond which there is nothing or before or after which there is nothing, — although too the alternative is a Void or Nihil which can be only an abyss of the Infinite into which we refuse to look; an infinite mystic zero of Non-Existence would replace an infinite *x* as a necessary postulate, a basis for our seeing of all that is to us existence. But even if we refuse to recognise anything as real except the limitless expanding finite of the material universe and its teeming determinations, the enigma remains the same. Infinite existence, infinite non-being or boundless finite, all are to us original indeterminates or indeterminables; we can assign to them no distinct characters or features, nothing which would predetermine their determinations. To describe the fundamental character of the universe as Space or Time or Space-Time does not help us; for even if these are not abstractions of our intelligence which we impose by our mental view on the cosmos, the mind's necessary perspective of its picture, these too are indeterminates

and carry in themselves no clue to the origin of the determinations that take place in them; there is still no explanation of the strange process by which things are determined or of their powers, qualities and properties, no revelation of their true nature, origin and significance.

Actually to our Science this infinite or indeterminate Existence reveals itself as an Energy, known not by itself but by its works, which throws up in its motion waves of energism and in them a multitude of infinitesimals; these, grouping themselves to form larger infinitesimals, become a basis for all the creations of the Energy, even those farthest away from the material basis, for the emergence of a world of organised Matter, for the emergence of Life, for the emergence of Consciousness, for all the still unexplained activities of evolutionary Nature. On the original process are erected a multitude of processes which we can observe, follow, can take advantage of many of them, utilise; but they are none of them, fundamentally, explicable. We know now that different groupings and a varying number of electric infinitesimals can produce or serve as the constituent occasion — miscalled the cause, for here there seems to be only a necessary antecedent condition, — for the appearance of larger atomic infinitesimals of different natures, qualities, powers; but we fail to discover how these different dispositions can come to constitute these different atoms, — how the differentiae in the constituent occasion or cause necessitate the differentiae in the constituted outcome or result. We know also that certain combinations of certain invisible atomic infinitesimals produce or occasion new and visible determinations quite different in nature, quality and power from the constituent infinitesimals; but we fail to discover, for instance, how a fixed formula for the combination of oxygen and hydrogen comes to determine the appearance of water which is evidently something more than a combination of gases, a new creation, a new form of substance, a material manifestation of a quite new character. We see that a seed develops into a tree, we follow the line of the process of production and we utilise it; but we do not discover how a tree can grow out of a seed, how the life and form of the tree come to be implied in the substance or energy of the seed or, if that be rather the fact,

how the seed can develop into a tree. We know that genes and chromosomes are the cause of hereditary transmissions, not only of physical but of psychological variations; but we do not discover how psychological characteristics can be contained and transmitted in this inconscient material vehicle. We do not see or know, but it is expounded to us as a cogent account of Nature-process, that a play of electrons, of atoms and their resultant molecules, of cells, glands, chemical secretions and physiological processes manages by their activity on the nerves and brain of a Shakespeare or a Plato to produce or could be perhaps the dynamic occasion for the production of a *Hamlet* or a *Symposium* or a *Republic*; but we fail to discover or appreciate how such material movements could have composed or necessitated the composition of these highest points of thought and literature: the divergence here of the determinants and the determination becomes so wide that we are no longer able to follow the process, much less understand or utilise. These formulae of Science may be pragmatically correct and infallible, they may govern the practical how of Nature's processes, but they do not disclose the intrinsic how or why; rather they have the air of the formulae of a cosmic Magician, precise, irresistible, automatically successful each in its field, but their rationale is fundamentally unintelligible.

There is more to perplex us; for we see the original indeterminate Energy throwing out general determinates of itself, — we might equally in their relation to the variety of their products call them generic indeterminates, — with their appropriate states of substance and determined forms of that substance: the latter are numerous, sometimes innumerable variations on the substance-energy which is their base: but none of these variations seems to be predetermined by anything in the nature of the general indeterminate. An electric Energy produces positive, negative, neutral forms of itself, forms that are at once waves and particles; a gaseous state of energy-substance produces a considerable number of different gases; a solid state of energy-substance from which results the earth principle develops into different forms of earth and rock of many kinds and numerous minerals and metals; a life principle produces its vegetable

kingdom teeming with a countless foison of quite different plants, trees, flowers; a principle of animal life produces an enormous variety of genus, species, individual variations: so it proceeds into human life and mind and its mind-types towards the still unwritten end or perhaps the yet occult sequel of that unfinished evolutionary chapter. Throughout there is the constant rule of a general sameness in the original determinate and, subject to this substantial sameness of basic substance and nature, a profuse variation in the generic and individual determinates; an identical law obtains of sameness or similarity in the genus or species with numerous variations often meticulously minute in the individual. But we do not find anything in any general or generic determinate necessitating the variant determinations that result from it. A necessity of immutable sameness at the base, of free and unaccountable variations on the surface seems to be the law; but who or what necessitates or determines? What is the rationale of the determination, what is its original truth or its significance? What compels or impels this exuberant play of varying possibilities which seem to have no aim or meaning unless it be the beauty or delight of creation? A Mind, a seeking and curious inventive Thought, a hidden determining Will might be there, but there is no trace of it in the first and fundamental appearance of material Nature.

A first possible explanation points to a self-organising dynamic Chance that is at work, — a paradox necessitated by the appearance of inevitable order on one side, of unaccountable freak and fantasy on the other side of the cosmic phenomenon we call Nature. An inconscient and inconsequent Force, we may say, that acts at random and creates this or that by a general chance without any determining principle, — determinations coming in only as the result of a persistent repetition of the same rhythm of action and succeeding because only this repetitive rhythm could succeed in keeping things in being, — this is the energy of Nature. But this implies that somewhere in the origin of things there is a boundless Possibility or a womb of innumerable possibilities that are manifested out of it by the original Energy, — an incalculable Inconscient which we find some embarrassment in calling either an Existence or a Non-Existence;

for without some such origin and basis the appearance and the action of the Energy is unintelligible. Yet an opposite aspect of the nature of the cosmic phenomenon as we see it appears to forbid the theory of a random action generating a persistent order. There is too much of an iron insistence on order, on a law basing the possibilities. One would be justified rather in supposing that there is an inherent imperative Truth of things unseen by us, but a Truth capable of manifold manifestation, throwing out a multitude of possibilities and variants of itself which the creative Energy by its action turns into so many realised actualities. This brings us to a second explanation, — a mechanical necessity in things, its workings recognisable by us as so many mechanical laws of Nature; — the necessity, we might say, of some such secret inherent Truth of things as we have supposed, governing automatically the processes we observe in action in the universe. But a theory of mechanical Necessity by itself does not elucidate the free play of the endless unaccountable variations which are visible in the evolution: there must be behind the Necessity or in it a law of unity associated with a coexistent but dependent law of multiplicity, both insisting on manifestation; but the unity of what, the multiplicity of what? Mechanical Necessity can give no answer. Again the emergence of consciousness out of the Inconscient is a stumbling-block in the way of this theory; for it is a phenomenon which can have no place in an all-pervading truth of inconscient mechanical Necessity. If there is a necessity which compels the emergence, it can be only this, that there is already a consciousness concealed in the Inconscient, waiting for evolution and when all is ready breaking out from its prison of apparent Nescience. We may indeed get rid of the difficulty of the imperative order of things by supposing that it does not exist, that determinism in Nature is imposed on it by our thought which needs such an imperative order to enable it to deal with its surroundings, but in reality there is no such thing; there is only a Force experimenting in a random action of infinitesimals which build up in their general results different determinations by a repetitive persistence operative in the sum of their action; thus we go back from Necessity to Chance as the basis of our existence. But what then

is this Mind, this Consciousness which differs so radically from the Energy that produced it that for its action it has to impose its idea and need of order on the world she has made and in which it is obliged to live? There would then be the double contradiction of consciousness emerging from a fundamental Inconscience and of a Mind of order and reason manifesting as the brilliant final consequence of a world created by inconscient Chance. These things may be possible, but they need a better explanation than any yet given before we can accord to them our acceptance.

This opens the way for other explanations which make Consciousness the creator of this world out of an apparent original Inconscience. A Mind, a Will seems to have imagined and organised the universe, but it has veiled itself behind its creation; its first erection has been this screen of an inconscient Energy and a material form of substance, at once a disguise of its presence and a plastic creative basis on which it could work as an artisan uses for his production of forms and patterns a dumb and obedient material. All these things we see around us are then the thoughts of an extracosmic Divinity, a Being with an omnipotent and omniscient Mind and Will, who is responsible for the mathematical law of the physical universe, for its artistry of beauty, for its strange play of samenesses and variations, of concordances and discords, of combining and intermingling opposites, for the drama of consciousness struggling to exist and seeking to affirm itself in an inconscient universal order. The fact that this Divinity is invisible to us, undiscoverable by our mind and senses, offers no difficulty, since self-evidence or direct sign of an extracosmic Creator could not be expected in a cosmos which is void of his presence: the patent signals everywhere of the works of an Intelligence, of law, design, formula, adaptation of means to end, constant and inexhaustible invention, fantasy even but restrained by an ordering Reason might be considered sufficient proof of this origin of things. Or if this Creator is not entirely supracosmic, but is also immanent in his works, even then there need be no other sign of him, — except indeed to some consciousness evolving in this inconscient world, but only when its evolution reached a point at which it could become aware of the indwelling Presence. The intervention of this

evolving consciousness would not be a difficulty, since there would be no contradiction of the basic nature of things in its appearance; an omnipotent Mind could easily infuse something of itself into its creatures. One difficulty remains; it is the arbitrary nature of the creation, the incomprehensibility of its purpose, the crude meaninglessness of its law of unnecessary ignorance, strife and suffering, its ending without denouement or issue. A play? But why this stamp of so many undivine elements and characters in the play of One whose nature must be supposed to be divine? To the suggestion that what we see worked out in the world is the thoughts of God, the retort can be made that God could well have had better thoughts and the best thought of all would have been to refrain from the creation of an unhappy and unintelligible universe. All theistic explanations of existence starting from an extracosmic Deity stumble over this difficulty and can only evade it; it would disappear only if the Creator were, even though exceeding the creation, yet immanent in it, himself in some sort both the player and the play, an Infinite casting infinite possibilities into the set form of an evolutionary cosmic order.

On that hypothesis, there must be behind the action of the material Energy a secret involved Consciousness, cosmic, infinite, building up through the action of that frontal Energy its means of an evolutionary manifestation, a creation out of itself in the boundless finite of the material universe. The apparent inconscience of the material Energy would be an indispensable condition for the structure of the material world-substance in which this Consciousness intends to involve itself so that it may grow by evolution out of its apparent opposite; for without some such device a complete involution would be impossible. If there is such a creation by the Infinite out of itself, it must be the manifestation, in a material disguise, of truths or powers of its own being: the forms or vehicles of these truths or powers would be the basic general or fundamental determinates we see in Nature; the particular determinates, which otherwise are unaccountable variations that have emerged from the vague general stuff in which they originate, would be the appropriate forms or vehicles of the possibilities that the truths or powers

residing in these fundamentals bore within them. The principle of free variation of possibilities natural to an infinite Consciousness would be the explanation of the aspect of inconscient Chance of which we are aware in the workings of Nature, — inconscient only in appearance and so appearing because of the complete involution in Matter, because of the veil with which the secret Consciousness has disguised its presence. The principle of truths, real powers of the Infinite imperatively fulfilling themselves would be the explanation of the opposite aspect of a mechanical Necessity which we see in Nature, — mechanical in appearance only and so appearing because of the same veil of Inconscience. It would then be perfectly intelligible why the Inconscient does its works with a constant principle of mathematical architecture, of design, of effective arrangement of numbers, of adaptation of means to ends, of inexhaustible device and invention, one might almost say, a constant experimental skill and an automatism of purpose. The appearance of consciousness out of an apparent Inconscience would also be no longer inexplicable.

All the unexplained processes of Nature would find their meaning and their place if this hypothesis proved to be tenable. Energy seems to create substance, but, in reality, as existence is inherent in Consciousness-Force, so also substance would be inherent in Energy, — the Energy a manifestation of the Force, substance a manifestation of the secret Existence. But as it is a spiritual substance, it would not be apprehended by the material sense until it is given by Energy the forms of Matter seizable by that sense. One begins to understand also how arrangement of design, quantity and number can be a base for the manifestation of quality and property; for design, quantity and number are powers of existence-substance, quality and property are powers of the consciousness and its force that reside in the existence; they can then be made manifest and operative by a rhythm and process of substance. The growth of the tree out of the seed would be accounted for, like all other similar phenomena, by the indwelling presence of what we have called the Real-Idea; the Infinite's self-perception of the significant form, the living body of its power of existence that has

to emerge from its own self-compression in energy-substance, would be carried internally in the form of the seed, carried in the occult consciousness involved in that form, and would naturally evolve out of it. There would be no difficulty either in understanding on this principle how infinitesimals of a material character like the gene and the chromosome can carry in them psychological elements to be transmitted to the physical form that has to emerge from the human seed; it would be at bottom on the same principle in the objectivity of Matter as that which we find in our subjective experience, — for we see that the subconscient physical carries in it a mental psychological content, impressions of past events, habits, fixed mental and vital formations, fixed forms of character, and sends them up by an occult process to the waking consciousness, thus originating or influencing many activities of our nature.

On the same basis there would be no difficulty in understanding why the physiological functionings of the body help to determine the mind's psychological actions: for the body is not mere unconscious Matter: it is a structure of a secretly conscious Energy that has taken form in it. Itself occultly conscious, it is, at the same time, the vehicle of expression of an overt Consciousness that has emerged and is self-aware in our physical energy-substance. The body's functionings are a necessary machinery or instrumentation for the movements of this mental Inhabitant; it is only by setting the corporeal instrument in motion that the Conscious Being emerging, evolving in it can transmit its mind formations, will formations and turn them into a physical manifestation of itself in Matter. The capacity, the processes of the instrument must to a certain extent reshape the mind formations in their transition from mental shape into physical expression; its workings are necessary and must exercise their influence before that expression can become actual. The bodily instrument may even in some directions dominate its user; it may too by a force of habit suggest or create involuntary reactions of the consciousness inhabiting it before the working Mind and Will can control or interfere. All this is possible because the body has a "subconscient" consciousness of its own which counts in our total

self-expression; even, if we look at this outer instrumentation only, we can conclude that body determines mind, but this is only a minor truth and the major Truth is that mind determines body. In this view a still deeper Truth becomes conceivable; a spiritual entity ensouling the substance that veils it is the original determinant of both mind and body. On the other side, in the opposite order of process, — that by which the mind can transmit its ideas and commands to the body, can train it to be an instrument for new action, can even so impress it with its habitual demands or orders that the physical instinct carries them out automatically even when the mind is no longer consciously willing them, those also more unusual but well attested by which to an extraordinary and hardly limitable extent the mind can learn to determine the reactions of the body even to the overriding of its normal law or conditions of action, — these and other otherwise unaccountable aspects of the relation between these two elements of our being become easily understandable: for it is the secret consciousness in the living matter that receives from its greater companion; it is this in the body that in its own involved and occult fashion perceives or feels the demand on it and obeys the emerged or evolved consciousness which presides over the body. Finally, the conception of a divine Mind and Will creating the cosmos becomes justifiable, while at the same time the perplexing elements in it which our reasoning mentality refuses to ascribe to an arbitrary fiat of the Creator, find their explanation as inevitable phenomena of a Consciousness emerging with difficulty out of its opposite — but with the mission to override these contrary phenomena and manifest by a slow and difficult evolution its greater reality and true nature.

But an approach from the material end of Existence cannot give us any certitude of validity for this hypothesis or for that matter for any other explanation of Nature and her procedure: the veil cast by the original Inconscience is too thick for the Mind to pierce and it is behind this veil that is hidden the secret origination of what is manifested; there are seated the truths and powers underlying the phenomena and processes that appear to us in the material front of Nature. To know with

greater certitude we must follow the curve of evolving consciousness until it arrives at a height and largeness of self-enlightenment in which the primal secret is self-discovered; for presumably it must evolve, must eventually bring out what was held from the beginning by the occult original Consciousness in things of which it is a gradual manifestation. In Life it would be clearly hopeless to seek for the truth; for Life begins with a formulation in which consciousness is still submental and therefore to us as mental beings appears as inconscient or at most subconscious, and our own investigation into this stage of life studying it from outside cannot be more fruitful of the secret truth than our examination of Matter. Even when mind develops in life, its first functional aspect is a mentality involved in action, in vital and physical needs and preoccupations, in impulses, desires, sensations, emotions, unable to stand back from these things and observe and know them. In the human mind there is the first hope of understanding, discovery, a free comprehension; here we might seem to be coming to the possibility of self-knowledge and world-knowledge. But in fact our mind can at first only observe facts and processes and for the rest it has to make deductions and inferences, to construct hypotheses, to reason, to speculate. In order to discover the secret of Consciousness it would have to know itself and determine the reality of its own being and process; but as in animal life the emerging Consciousness is involved in vital action and movement, so in the human being mind-consciousness is involved in its own whirl of thoughts, an activity in which it is carried on without rest and in which its very reasonings and speculations are determined in their tendency, trend, conditions by its own temperament, mental turn, past formation and line of energy, inclination, preference, an inborn natural selection, — we do not freely determine our thinking according to the truth of things, it is determined for us by our nature. We can indeed stand back with a certain detachment and observe the workings of the mental Energy in us; but it is still only its process that we see and not any original source of our mental determinations: we can build theories and hypotheses of the process of Mind, but a veil is still there over the inner secret

of ourselves, our consciousness, our total nature.

It is only when we follow the yogic process of quieting the mind itself that a profounder result of our self-observation becomes possible. For first we discover that mind is a subtle substance, a general determinate — or generic indeterminate — which mental energy when it operates throws into forms or particular determinations of itself, thoughts, concepts, percepts, mental sentiments, activities of will and reactions of feeling, but which, when the energy is quiescent, can live either in an inert torpor or in an immobile silence and peace of self-existence. Next we see that the determinations of our mind do not all proceed from itself; for waves and currents of mental energy enter into it from outside: these take form in it or appear already formed from some universal Mind or from other minds and are accepted by us as our own thinking. We can perceive also an occult or subliminal mind in ourselves from which thoughts and perceptions and will-impulses and mental feelings arise; we can perceive too higher planes of consciousness from which a superior mind energy works through us or upon us. Finally we discover that that which observes all this is a mental being supporting the mind substance and mind energy; without this presence, their upholder and source of sanctions, they could not exist or operate. This mental being or Purusha first appears as a silent witness and, if that were all, we would have to accept the determinations of mind as a phenomenal activity imposed upon the being by Nature, by Prakriti, or else as a creation presented to it by Prakriti, a world of thought which Nature constructs and offers to the observing Purusha. But afterwards we find that the Purusha, the mental being, can depart from its posture of a silent or accepting Witness; it can become the source of reactions, accept, reject, even rule and regulate, become the giver of the command, the knower. A knowledge also arises that this mind-substance manifests the mental being, is its own expressive substance and the mental energy is its own consciousness-force, so that it is reasonable to conclude that all mind determinations arise from the being of the Purusha. But this conclusion is complicated by the fact that from another viewpoint our personal mind seems to be little more than a

formation of universal Mind, an engine for the reception, modification, propagation of cosmic thought-waves, idea-currents, will-suggestions, waves of feeling, sense-suggestions, form-suggestions. It has no doubt its own already realised expression, predispositions, propensities, personal temperament and nature; what comes from the universal can only find a place there if it is accepted and assimilated into the self-expression of the individual mental being, the personal Prakriti of the Purusha. But still, in view of these complexities, the question remains entire whether all this evolution and action is a phenomenal creation by some universal Energy presented to the mental being or an activity imposed by Mind-Energy on the Purusha's indeterminate, perhaps indeterminable existence, or whether the whole is something predetermined by some dynamic truth of Self within and only manifested on the mind surface. To know that we would have to touch or to enter into a cosmic state of being and consciousness to which the totality of things and their integral principle would be better manifest than to our limited mind experience.

Overmind consciousness is such a state or principle beyond individual mind, beyond even universal mind in the Ignorance; it carries in itself a first direct and masterful cognition of cosmic truth: here then we might hope to understand something of the original working of things, get some insight into the fundamental movements of cosmic Nature. One thing indeed becomes clear; it is self-evident here that both the individual and the cosmos come from a transcendent Reality which takes form in them: the mind and life of the individual being, its self in nature must therefore be a partial self-expression of the cosmic Being and, both through that and directly, a self-expression of the transcendent Reality, — a conditional and half-veiled expression it may be, but still that is its significance. But also we see that what the expression shall be is also determined by the individual himself: only what he can in his nature receive, assimilate, formulate, his portion of the cosmic being or of the Reality, can find shape in his mind and life and physical parts; something that derives from Reality, something that is in the cosmos he expresses, but in the terms of his own self-expression, in the terms of

his own nature. But the original question set out for us by the phenomenon of the universe is not solved by the overmind knowledge, — the question, in this case, whether the building of thought, experience, world of perceptions of the mental Person, the mind Purusha, is truly a self-expression, a self-determination proceeding from some truth of his own spiritual being, a manifestation of that truth's dynamic possibilities, or whether it is not rather a creation or construction presented to him by Nature, by Prakriti, and only in the sense of being individualised in his personal formation of that Nature can it be said to be his own or dependent on him; or, again, it might be a play of a cosmic Imagination, a fantasia of the Infinite imposed on the blank indeterminable of his own eternal pure existence. These are the three views of creation that seem to have an equal chance of being right, and mind is incapable of definitely deciding between them; for each view is armed with its own mental logic and its appeal to intuition and experience. Overmind seems to add to the perplexity, for the overmental view of things allows each possibility to formulate itself in its own independent right and realise its own existence in cognition, in dynamic self-presentation, in substantiating experience.

In Overmind, in all the higher ranges of the mind, we find recurring the dichotomy of a pure silent self without feature or qualities or relations, self-existent, self-poised, self-sufficient, and the mighty dynamis of a determinative knowledge-power, of a creative consciousness and force which precipitates itself into the forms of the universe. This opposition which is yet a collocation, as if these two were correlatives or complementaries, although apparent contradictions of each other, sublimates itself into the co-existence of an impersonal Brahman without qualities, a fundamental divine Reality free from all relations or determinates, and a Brahman with infinite qualities, a fundamental divine Reality who is the source and container and master of all relations and determinations — Nirguna, Saguna. If we pursue the Nirguna into a farthest possible self-experience, we arrive at a supreme Absolute void of all relations and determinations, the ineffable first and last word of existence. If we enter through the Saguna into some ultimate possible of experience, we arrive at a

divine Absolute, a personal supreme and omnipresent Godhead, transcendent as well as universal, an infinite Master of all relations and determinations who can uphold in his being a million universes and pervade each with a single ray of his self-light and a single degree of his ineffable existence. The overmind consciousness maintains equally these two truths of the Eternal which face the mind as mutually exclusive alternatives; it admits both as supreme aspects of one Reality: somewhere, then, behind them there must be a still greater Transcendence which originates them or upholds them both in its supreme Eternity. But what can that be of which such opposites are equal truths, unless it be an original indeterminable Mystery of which any knowledge, any understanding by the mind is impossible? We can know it indeed to some degree, in some kind of experience or realisation, by its aspects, powers, constant series of fundamental negatives and positives through which we have to pursue it, independently in either or integrally in both together; but in the last resort it seems to escape even from the highest mentality and remain unknowable.

But if the supreme Absolute is indeed a pure Indeterminable, then no creation, no manifestation, no universe is possible. And yet the universe exists. What then is it that creates this contradiction, is able to effect the impossible, bring this insoluble riddle of self-division into existence? A Power of some kind it must be, and since the Absolute is the sole reality, the one origin of all things, this Power must proceed from it, must have some relation with it, a connection, a dependence. For if it is quite other than the supreme Reality, a cosmic Imagination imposing its determinations on the eternal blank of the Indeterminable, then the sole existence of an absolute Parabrahman is no longer admissible; there is then a dualism at the source of things,—not substantially different from the Sankhya dualism of Soul and Nature. If it is a Power, the sole Power indeed, of the Absolute, we have this logical impossibility that the existence of the Supreme Being and the Power of his existence are entirely opposite to each other, two supreme contradictories; for Brahman is free from all possibility of relations and determinations, but Maya is a creative Imagination imposing these very things upon it, an originator of

relations and determinations of which Brahman must necessarily be the supporter and witness, — to the logical reason an inadmissible formula. If it is accepted, it can only be as a suprarational mystery, something neither real nor unreal, inexplicable in its nature, *anirvacanīya*. But the difficulties are so great that it can be accepted only if it imposes itself irresistibly as the inevitable ultimate, the end and summit of metaphysical inquiry and spiritual experience. For even if all things are illusory creations, they must have at least a subjective existence and they can exist nowhere except in the consciousness of the Sole Existence; they are then subjective determinations of the Indeterminable. If, on the contrary, the determinations of this Power are real creations, out of what are they determined, what is their substance? It is not possible that they are made out of a Nothing, a Non-Existence other than the Absolute; for that will erect a new dualism, a great positive Zero over against the greater indeterminable *x* we have supposed to be the one Reality. It is evident therefore that the Reality cannot be a rigid Indeterminable. Whatever is created must be of it and in it, and what is of the substance of the utterly Real must itself be real: a vast baseless negation of reality purporting to be real cannot be the sole outcome of the eternal Truth, the Infinite Existence. It is perfectly understandable that the Absolute is and must be indeterminable in the sense that it cannot be limited by any determination or any sum of possible determinations, but not in the sense that it is incapable of self-determination. The Supreme Existence cannot be incapable of creating true self-determinations of its being, incapable of upholding a real self-creation or manifestation in its self-existent infinite.

Overmind, then, gives us no final and positive solution; it is in a supramental cognition beyond it that we are left to seek for an answer. A supramental Truth-Consciousness is at once the self-awareness of the Infinite and Eternal and a power of self-determination inherent in that self-awareness; the first is its foundation and status, the second is its power of being, the dynamis of its self-existence. All that a timeless eternity of self-awareness sees in itself as truth of being, the conscious power of its being manifests in Time-eternity. To Supermind therefore

the Supreme is not a rigid Indeterminable, an all-negating Absolute; an infinite of being complete to itself in its own immutable purity of existence, its sole power a pure consciousness able only to dwell on the being's changeless eternity, on the immobile delight of its sheer self-existence, is not the whole Reality. The Infinite of Being must also be an Infinite of Power; containing in itself an eternal repose and quiescence, it must also be capable of an eternal action and creation: but this too must be an action in itself, a creation out of its own self eternal and infinite, since there could be nothing else out of which it could create; any basis of creation seeming to be other than itself must be still really in itself and of itself and could not be something foreign to its existence. An infinite Power cannot be solely a Force resting in a pure inactive sameness, an immutable quiescence; it must have in it endless powers of its being and energy: an infinite Consciousness must hold within it endless truths of its own self-awareness. These in action would appear to our cognition as aspects of its being, to our spiritual sense as powers and movements of its dynamis, to our aesthesis as instruments and formulations of its delight of existence. Creation would then be a self-manifestation: it would be an ordered deploying of the infinite possibilities of the Infinite. But every possibility implies a truth of being behind it, a reality in the Existent; for without that supporting truth there could not be any possibles. In manifestation a fundamental reality of the Existent would appear to our cognition as a fundamental spiritual aspect of the Divine Absolute; out of it would emerge all its possible manifestations, its innate dynamisms: these again must create or rather bring out of a non-manifest latency their own significant forms, expressive powers, native processes; their own being would develop their own becoming, *svarūpa, svabhāva.* This then would be the complete process of creation: but in our mind we do not see the complete process, we see only possibilities that determine themselves into actualities and, though we infer or conjecture, we are not sure of a necessity, a predetermining truth, an imperative behind them which capacitates the possibilities, decides the actualities. Our mind is an observer of actuals, an inventor or discoverer of possibilities, but not a seer of the occult imperatives that necessitate

the movements and forms of a creation: for in the front of universal existence there are only forces determining results by some balance of the meeting of their powers; the original Determinant or determinants, if it or they exist, are veiled from us by our ignorance. But to the supramental Truth-Consciousness these imperatives would be apparent, would be the very stuff of its seeing and experience: in the supramental creative process the imperatives, the nexus of possibilities, the resultant actualities would be a single whole, an indivisible movement; the possibilities and actualities would carry in themselves the inevitability of their originating imperative, — all their results, all their creation would be the body of the Truth which they manifest in predetermined significant forms and powers of the All-Existence.

Our fundamental cognition of the Absolute, our substantial spiritual experience of it is the intuition or the direct experience of an infinite and eternal Existence, an infinite and eternal Consciousness, an infinite and eternal Delight of Existence. In overmental and mental cognition it is possible to make discrete and even to separate this original unity into three self-existent aspects: for we can experience a pure causeless eternal Bliss so intense that we are that alone; existence, consciousness seem to be swallowed up in it, no longer ostensibly in presence; a similar experience of pure and absolute consciousness and a similar exclusive identity with it is possible, and there can be too a like identifying experience of pure and absolute existence. But to a supermind cognition these three are always an inseparable Trinity, even though one can stand in front of the others and manifest its own spiritual determinates; for each has its primal aspects or its inherent self-formations, but all of these together are original to the triune Absolute. Love, Joy and Beauty are the fundamental determinates of the Divine Delight of Existence, and we can see at once that these are of the very stuff and nature of that Delight: they are not alien impositions on the being of the Absolute or creations supported by it but outside it; they are truths of its being, native to its consciousness, powers of its force of existence. So too is it with the fundamental determinates of the absolute consciousness, — knowledge and will; they

are truths and powers of the original Consciousness-Force and are inherent in its very nature. This authenticity becomes still more evident when we regard the fundamental spiritual determinates of the absolute Existence; they are its triune powers, necessary first postulates for all its self-creation or manifestation, — Self, the Divine, the Conscious Being; Atman, Ishwara, Purusha.

If we pursue the process of self-manifestation farther, we shall see that each of these aspects or powers reposes in its first action on a triad or trinity; for Knowledge inevitably takes its stand in a trinity of the Knower, the Known and Knowledge; Love finds itself in a trinity of the Lover, the Beloved and Love; Will is self-fulfilled in a trinity of the Lord of the Will, the object of the Will and the executive Force; Joy has its original and utter gladness in a trinity of the Enjoyer, the Enjoyed and the Delight that unites them; Self as inevitably appears and founds its manifestation in a trinity of Self as subject, Self as object and self-awareness holding together Self as subject-object. These and other primal powers and aspects assume their status among the fundamental spiritual self-determinations of the Infinite; all others are determinates of the fundamental spiritual determinates, *significant relations, significant powers, significant forms of* being, consciousness, force, delight, — energies, conditions, ways, lines of the truth-process of the Consciousness-Force of the Eternal, imperatives, possibilities, actualities of its manifestation. All this deploying of powers and possibilities and their inherent consequences is held together by supermind cognition in an intimate oneness; it keeps them founded consciously on the original Truth and maintained in the harmony of the truths they manifest and are in their nature. There is here no imposition of imaginations, no arbitrary creation, neither is there any division, fragmentation, irreconcilable contrariety or disparateness. But in Mind of Ignorance these phenomena appear; for there a limited consciousness sees and deals with everything as if all were separate objects of cognition or separate existences and it seeks so to know, possess and enjoy them and gets mastery over them or suffers their mastery: but, behind its ignorance, what the soul in it is seeking for is the Reality, the Truth, the Conscious-

ness, the Power, the Delight by which they exist; the mind has to learn to awaken to this true seeking and true knowledge veiled within itself, to the Reality from which all things hold their truth, to the Consciousness of which all consciousnesses are entities, to the Power from which all get what force of being they have within them, to the Delight of which all delights are partial figures. This limitation of consciousness and this awakening to the integrality of consciousness are also a process of self-manifestation, are a self-determination of the Spirit; even when contrary to the Truth in their appearances, the things of the limited consciousness have in their deeper sense and reality a divine significance; they too bring out a truth or a possibility of the Infinite. Of some such nature, as far as it can be expressed in mental formulas, would be the supramental cognition of things which sees the one Truth everywhere and would so arrange its account to us of our existence, its report of the secret of creation and the significance of the universe.

At the same time indeterminability is also a necessary element in our conception of the Absolute and in our spiritual experience: this is the other side of the supramental regard on being and on things. The Absolute is not limitable or definable by any one determination or by any sum of determinations; on the other side, it is not bound down to an indeterminable vacancy of pure existence. On the contrary, it is the source of all determinations: its indeterminability is the natural, the necessary condition both of its infinity of being and its infinity of power of being; it can be infinitely all things because it is no thing in particular and exceeds any definable totality. It is this essential indeterminability of the Absolute that translates itself into our consciousness through the fundamental negating positives of our spiritual experience, the immobile immutable Self, the Nirguna Brahman, the Eternal without qualities, the pure featureless One Existence, the Impersonal, the Silence void of activities, the Non-being, the Ineffable and the Unknowable. On the other side it is the essence and source of all determinations, and this dynamic essentiality manifests to us through the fundamental affirming positives in which the Absolute equally meets us; for it is the Self that becomes all things, the Saguna Brahman, the

Eternal with infinite qualities, the One who is the Many, the infinite Person who is the source and foundation of all persons and personalities, the Lord of creation, the Word, the Master of all works and action; it is that which being known all is known: these affirmatives correspond to those negatives. For it is not possible in a supramental cognition to split asunder the two sides of the One Existence, — even to speak of them as sides is excessive, for they are in each other, their co-existence or one-existence is eternal and their powers sustaining each other found the self-manifestation of the Infinite.

But neither is the separate cognition of them entirely an illusion or a complete error of the Ignorance; this too has its validity for spiritual experience. For these primary aspects of the Absolute are fundamental spiritual determinates or indeterminates answering at this spiritual end or beginning to the general determinates or generic indeterminates of the material end or inconscient beginning of the descending and ascending Manifestation. Those that seem to us negative carry in them the freedom of the Infinite from limitation by its own determinations; their realisation disengages the spirit within, liberates us and enables us to participate in this supremacy: thus, when once we pass into or through the experience of immutable self, we are no longer bound and limited in the inner status of our being by the determinations and creations of Nature. On the other, the dynamic side, this original freedom enables the Consciousness to create a world of determinations without being bound by it: it enables it also to withdraw from what it has created and re-create in a higher truth-formula. It is on this freedom that is based the spirit's power of infinite variation of the truth-possibilities of existence and also its capacity to create, without tying itself to its workings, any and every form of Necessity or system of order: the individual being too by experience of these negating absolutes can participate in that dynamic liberty, can pass from one order of self-formulation to a higher order. At the stage when from the mental it has to move towards its supramental status, one most liberatingly helpful, if not indispensable experience that may intervene is the entry into a total Nirvana of mentality and mental ego, a passage into the silence

of the Spirit. In any case, a realisation of the pure Self must always precede the transition to that mediating eminence of the consciousness from which a clear vision of the ascending and descending stairs of manifested existence is commanded and the possession of the free power of ascent and descent becomes a spiritual prerogative. An independent completeness of identity with each of the primal aspects and powers — not narrowing as in the mind into a sole engrossing experience seeming to be final and integral, for that would be incompatible with the realisation of the unity of all aspects and powers of existence — is a capacity inherent in consciousness in the Infinite; that indeed is the base and justification of the overmind cognition and its will to carry each aspect, each power, each possibility to its independent fullness. But the Supermind keeps always and in every status or condition the spiritual realisation of the Unity of all; the intimate presence of that unity is there even within the completest grasp of each thing, each state given its whole delight of itself, power and value: there is thus no losing sight of the affirmative aspects even when there is the full acceptance of the truth of the negative. The Overmind keeps still the sense of this underlying Unity; that is for it the secure base of the independent experience. In Mind the knowledge of the unity of all aspects is lost on the surface, the consciousness is plunged into engrossing, exclusive separate affirmations; but there too, even in the Mind's ignorance, the total reality still remains behind the exclusive absorption and can be recovered in the form of a profound mental intuition or else in the idea or sentiment of an underlying truth of integral oneness; in the spiritual mind this can develop into an ever-present experience.

All aspects of the omnipresent Reality have their fundamental truth in the Supreme Existence. Thus even the aspect or power of Inconscience, which seems to be an opposite, a negation of the eternal Reality, yet corresponds to a Truth held in itself by the self-aware and all-conscious Infinite. It is, when we look closely at it, the Infinite's power of plunging the consciousness into a trance of self-involution, a self-oblivion of the Spirit veiled in its own abysses where nothing is manifest but all inconceivably is and can emerge from that ineffable latency. In the

heights of Spirit this state of cosmic or infinite trance-sleep appears to our cognition as a luminous uttermost Superconscience: at the other end of being it offers itself to cognition as the Spirit's potency of presenting to itself the opposites of its own truths of being, — an abyss of non-existence, a profound Night of inconscience, a fathomless swoon of insensibility from which yet all forms of being, consciousness and delight of existence can manifest themselves, — but they appear in limited terms, in slowly emerging and increasing self-formulations, even in contrary terms of themselves; it is the play of a secret all-being, all-delight, all-knowledge, but it observes the rules of its own self-oblivion, self-opposition, self-limitation until it is ready to surpass it. This is the Inconscience and Ignorance that we see at work in the material universe. It is not a denial, it is one term, one formula of the infinite and eternal Existence.

It is important to observe here the sense that is acquired in such a total cognition of cosmic being by the phenomenon of the Ignorance, its assigned place in the spiritual economy of the universe. If all that we experience were an imposition, an unreal creation in the Absolute, both cosmic and individual existence would be in their very nature an Ignorance; the sole real knowledge would be the indeterminable self-awareness of the Absolute. If all were the erection of a temporal and phenomenal creation over against the reality of the witnessing timeless Eternal and if the creation were not a manifestation of the Reality but an arbitrary self-effective cosmic construction, that too would be a sort of imposition. Our knowledge of the creation would be the knowledge of a temporary structure of evanescent consciousness and being, a dubious Becoming that passes across the vision of the Eternal, not a knowledge of Reality; that too would be an Ignorance. But if all is a manifestation of the Reality and itself real by the constituting immanence, the substantiating essence and presence of the Reality, then the awareness of individual being and world-being would be in its spiritual origin and nature a play of the infinite self-knowledge and all-knowledge: ignorance could be only a subordinate movement, a suppressed or restricted cognition or a partial and imperfect evolving knowledge with the true and total self-awareness and all-awareness

concealed both in it and behind it. It would be a temporary phenomenon, not the cause and essence of cosmic existence; its inevitable consummation would be a return of the spirit, not out of the cosmos to a sole supracosmic self-awareness, but even in the cosmos itself to an integral self-knowledge and all-knowledge.

It might be objected that the supramental cognition is, after all, not the final truth of things. Beyond the supramental plane of consciousness which is an intermediate step from overmind and mind to the complete experience of Sachchidananda, are the greatest heights of the manifested Spirit: here surely existence would not at all be based on the determination of the One in multiplicity, it would manifest solely and simply a pure identity in oneness. But the supramental Truth-Consciousness would not be absent from these planes, for it is an inherent power of Sachchidananda: the difference would be that the determinations would not be demarcations, they would be plastic, interfused, each a boundless finite. For there all is in each and each is in all radically and integrally, — there would be to the utmost a fundamental awareness of identity, a mutual inclusion and interpenetration of consciousness: knowledge as we envisage it would not exist, because it would not be needed, since all would be direct action of consciousness in being itself, identical, intimate, intrinsically self-aware and all-aware. But still relations of consciousness, relations of mutual delight of existence, relations of self-power of being with self-power of being would not be excluded; these highest spiritual planes would not be a field of blank indeterminability, a vacancy of pure existence.

It might be said again that, even so, in Sachchidananda itself at least, above all worlds of manifestation, there could be nothing but the self-awareness of pure existence and consciousness and a pure delight of existence. Or, indeed, this triune being itself might well be only a trinity of original spiritual self-determinations of the Infinite; these too, like all determinations, would cease to exist in the ineffable Absolute. But our position is that these must be inherent truths of the supreme being; their utmost reality must be pre-existent in the Absolute even if they are ineffably other there than what they are in the spiritual mind's

highest possible experience. The Absolute is not a mystery of infinite blankness nor a supreme sum of negations; nothing can manifest that is not justified by some self-power of the original and omnipresent Reality.

CHAPTER II

Brahman, Purusha, Ishwara— Maya, Prakriti, Shakti

It is there in beings indivisible and as if divided.

Gita.[1]

Brahman, the Truth, the Knowledge, the Infinite.

Taittiriya Upanishad.[2]

Know Purusha and Prakriti to be both eternal without beginning.

Gita.[3]

One must know Maya as Prakriti and the Master of Maya as the great Lord of all.

Swetaswatara Upanishad.[4]

It is the might of the Godhead in the world that turns the wheel of Brahman. Him one must know, the supreme Lord of all lords, the supreme Godhead above all godheads. Supreme too is his Shakti and manifold the natural working of her knowledge and her force. One Godhead, occult in all beings, the inner Self of all beings, the all-pervading, absolute without qualities, the overseer of all actions, the witness, the knower.

Swetaswatara Upanishad.[5]

THERE is then a supreme Reality eternal, absolute and infinite. Because it is absolute and infinite, it is in its essence indeterminable. It is indefinable and inconceivable by finite and defining Mind; it is ineffable by a mind-created speech; it is describable neither by our negations, *neti neti*, — for we cannot limit it by saying it is not this, it is not that, — nor by our affirmations, for we cannot fix it by saying it is this, it is that, *iti iti*. And yet, though in this way unknowable to us, it is not altogether and in every way unknowable; it is self-evident to itself and, although inexpressible, yet self-evident to a knowledge by identity of which the spiritual being in us must be capable; for that spiritual being is in its essence and its original and intimate reality not other than this Supreme Existence.

But although thus indeterminable to Mind, because of its

[1] XIII. 17. [2] II. 1. [3] XIII. 20. [4] IV. 10. [5] VI. 1, 7, 8, 11.

absoluteness and infinity, we discover that this Supreme and Eternal Infinite determines itself to our consciousness in the universe by real and fundamental truths of its being which are beyond the universe and in it and are the very foundation of its existence. These truths present themselves to our conceptual cognition as the fundamental aspects in which we see and experience the omnipresent Reality. In themselves they are seized directly, not by intellectual understanding but by a spiritual intuition, a spiritual experience in the very substance of our consciousness; but they can also be caught at in conception by a large and plastic idea and can be expressed in some sort by a plastic speech which does not insist too much on rigid definition or limit the wideness and subtlety of the idea. In order to express this experience or this idea with any nearness a language has to be created which is at once intuitively metaphysical and revealingly poetic, admitting significant and living images as the vehicle of a close, suggestive and vivid indication, — a language such as we find hammered out into a subtle and pregnant massiveness in the Veda and the Upanishads. In the ordinary tongue of metaphysical thought we have to be content with a distant indication, an approximation by abstractions, which may still be of some service to our intellect, for it is this kind of speech which suits our method of logical and rational understanding; but if it is to be of real service, the intellect must consent to pass out of the bounds of a finite logic and accustom itself to the logic of the Infinite. On this condition alone, by this way of seeing and thinking, it ceases to be paradoxical or futile to speak of the ineffable: but if we insist on applying a finite logic to the Infinite, the omnipresent Reality will escape us and we shall grasp instead an abstract shadow, a dead form petrified into speech or a hard incisive graph which speaks of the Reality but does not express it. Our way of knowing must be appropriate to that which is to be known; otherwise we achieve only a distant speculation, a figure of knowledge and not veritable knowledge.

The supreme Truth-aspect which thus manifests itself to us is an eternal and infinite and absolute self-existence, self-awareness, self-delight of being; this founds all things and secretly supports and pervades all things. This Self-existence reveals

itself again in three terms of its essential nature, — Self, Conscious Being or Spirit, and God or the Divine Being. The Indian terms are more satisfactory, — Brahman the Reality is Atman, Purusha, Ishwara; for these terms grew from a root of Intuition and, while they have a comprehensive preciseness, are capable of a plastic application which avoids both vagueness in the use and the rigid snare of a too limiting intellectual concept. The Supreme Brahman is that which in Western metaphysics is called the Absolute: but Brahman is at the same time the omnipresent Reality in which all that is relative exists as its forms or its movements; this is an Absolute which takes all relativities in its embrace. The Upanishads affirm that all this is the Brahman; Mind is Brahman, Life is Brahman, Matter is Brahman; addressing Vayu, the Lord of Air, of Life, it is said "O Vayu, thou art manifest Brahman"; and, pointing to man and beast and bird and insect, each separately is identified with the One, — "O Brahman, thou art this old man and boy and girl, this bird, this insect." Brahman is the Consciousness that knows itself in all that exists; Brahman is the Force that sustains the power of God and Titan and Demon, the Force that acts in man and animal and the forms and energies of Nature; Brahman is the Ananda, the secret Bliss of existence which is the ether of our being and without which none could breathe or live. Brahman is the inner Soul in all; it has taken a form in correspondence with each created form which it inhabits. The Lord of Beings is that which is conscious in the conscious being, but he is also the Conscious in inconscient things, the One who is master and in control of the many that are passive in the hands of Force-Nature. He is the Timeless and Time; he is Space and all that is in Space; he is Causality and the cause and the effect: He is the thinker and his thought, the warrior and his courage, the gambler and his dice-throw. All realities and all aspects and all semblances are the Brahman; Brahman is the Absolute, the transcendent and incommunicable, the Supracosmic Existence that sustains the cosmos, the Cosmic Self that upholds all beings, but It is too the self of each individual: the soul or psychic entity is an eternal portion of the Ishwara; it is his supreme Nature or Consciousness-Force that has become the living being in a world

of living beings. The Brahman alone is, and because of It all are, for all are the Brahman; this Reality is the reality of everything that we see in Self and Nature. Brahman, the Ishwara, is all this by his Yoga-Maya, by the power of his Consciousness-Force put out in self-manifestation: he is the Conscious Being, Soul, Spirit, Purusha, and it is by his Nature, the force of his conscious self-existence that he is all things; he is the Ishwara, the omniscient and omnipotent All-ruler, and it is by his Shakti, his conscious Power, that he manifests himself in Time and governs the universe. These and similar statements taken together are all-comprehensive: it is possible for the mind to cut and select, to build a closed system and explain away all that does not fit within it; but it is on the complete and many-sided statement that we must take our stand if we have to acquire an integral knowledge.

An absolute, eternal and infinite Self-existence, Self-awareness, Self-delight of being that secretly supports and pervades the universe even while it is also beyond it, is, then, the first truth of spiritual experience. But this truth of being has at once an impersonal and a personal aspect; it is not only Existence, it is the one Being absolute, eternal and infinite. As there are three fundamental aspects in which we meet this Reality, — Self, Conscious Being or Spirit and God, the Divine Being, or to use the Indian terms, the absolute and omnipresent Reality, Brahman, manifest to us as Atman, Purusha, Ishwara, — so too its power of Consciousness appears to us in three aspects: it is the self-force of that consciousness conceptively creative of all things, Maya; it is Prakriti, Nature or Force made dynamically executive, working out all things under the witnessing eye of the Conscious Being, the Self or Spirit; it is the conscious Power of the Divine Being, Shakti, which is both conceptively creative and dynamically executive of all the divine workings. These three aspects and their powers base and comprise the whole of existence and all Nature and, taken together as a single whole, they reconcile the apparent disparateness and incompatibility of the supracosmic Transcendence, the cosmic universality and the separativeness of our individual existence; the Absolute, cosmic Nature and ourselves are linked in oneness by this triune

aspect of the one Reality. For taken by itself the existence of the Absolute, the Supreme Brahman, would be a contradiction of the relative universe and our own real existence would be incompatible with its sole incommunicable Reality. But the Brahman is at the same time omnipresent in all relativities; it is the Absolute independent of all relatives, the Absolute basing all relatives, the Absolute governing, pervading, constituting all relatives; there is nothing that is not the omnipresent Reality. In observing the triple aspect and the triple power we come to see how this is possible.

If we look at this picture of the Self-Existence and its works as a unitary unlimited whole of vision, it stands together and imposes itself by its convincing totality: but to the analysis of the logical intellect it offers an abundance of difficulties, such as all attempts to erect a logical system out of a perception of an illimitable Existence must necessarily create; for any such endeavour must either effect consistency by an arbitrary sectioning of the complex truth of things or else by its comprehensiveness become logically untenable. For we see that the Indeterminable determines itself as infinite and finite, the Immutable admits a constant mutability and endless differences, the One becomes an innumerable multitude, the Impersonal creates or supports personality, is itself a Person; the Self has a nature and is yet other than its nature; Being turns into becoming and yet it is always itself and other than its becomings; the Universal individualises itself and the Individual universalises himself; Brahman is at once void of qualities and capable of infinite qualities, the Lord and Doer of works, yet a non-doer and a silent witness of the workings of Nature. If we look carefully at these workings of Nature, once we put aside the veil of familiarity and our unthinking acquiescence in the process of things as natural because so they always happen, we discover that all she does in whole or in parts is a miracle, an act of some incomprehensible magic. The being of the Self-existence and the world that has appeared in it are, each of them and both together, a supra-rational mystery. There seems to us to be a reason in things because the processes of the physical finite are consistent to our view and their law determinable, but this reason in things, when

closely examined, seems to stumble at every moment against the irrational or infrarational and the suprarational: the consistency, the determinability of process seems to lessen rather than increase as we pass from matter to life and from life to mentality; if the finite consents to some extent to look as if it were rational, the infinitesimal refuses to be bound by the same laws and the infinite is unseizable. As for the action of the universe and its significance, it escapes us altogether; if Self, God or Spirit there be, his dealings with the world and us are incomprehensible, offer no clue that we can follow. God and Nature and even ourselves move in a mysterious way which is only partially and at points intelligible, but as a whole escapes our comprehension. All the works of Maya look like the production of a suprarational magical Power which arranges things according to its wisdom or its phantasy, but a wisdom which is not ours and a phantasy which baffles our imagination. The Spirit that manifests things or manifests itself in them so obscurely, looks to our reason like a Magician and his power or Maya a creative magic: but magic can create illusions or it can create astounding realities, and we find it difficult to decide which of these suprarational processes faces us in this universe.

But, in fact, the cause of this impression must necessarily be sought not in anything illusory or fantastic in the Supreme or the universal Self-existence, but in our own inability to seize the supreme clue to its manifold existence or discover the secret plan and pattern of its action. The Self-existent is the Infinite and its way of being and of action must be the way of the Infinite, but our consciousness is limited, our reason built upon things finite: it is irrational to suppose that a finite consciousness and reason can be a measure of the Infinite; this smallness cannot judge that Immensity; this poverty bound to a limited use of its scanty means cannot conceive the opulent management of those riches; an ignorant half-knowledge cannot follow the motions of an All-Knowledge. Our reasoning is based upon our experience of the finite operations of physical Nature, on an incomplete observation and uncertain understanding of something that acts within limits; it has organised on that basis certain conceptions which it seeks to make general and universal, and

whatever contradicts or departs from these conceptions it regards as irrational, false or inexplicable. But there are different orders of the reality and the conceptions, measures, standards suitable to one need not be applicable to another order. Our physical being is built first upon an aggregate of infinitesimals, electrons, atoms, molecules, cells; but the law of action of these infinitesimals does not explain all the physical workings even of the human body, much less can they cover all the law and process of action of man's supraphysical parts, his life movements and mind movements and soul movements. In the body finites have been formed with their own habits, properties, characteristic ways of action; the body itself is a finite which is not a mere aggregate of these smaller finites which it uses as parts, organs, constituent instruments of its operations; it has developed a being and has a general law which surpasses its dependence upon these elements or constituents. The life and mind again are supraphysical finites with a different and more subtle mode of operation of their own, and no dependence on the physical parts for instrumentation can annul their intrinsic character; there is something more and other in our vital and mental being and vital and mental forces than the functioning of a physical body. But, again, each finite is in its reality or has behind it an Infinite which has built and supports and directs the finite it has made as its self-figure; so that even the being and law and process of the finite cannot be totally understood without a knowledge of that which is occult within or behind it: our finite knowledge, conceptions, standards may be valid within their limits, but they are incomplete and relative. A law founded upon an observation of what is divided in Space and Time cannot be confidently applied to the being and action of the Indivisible; not only it cannot be applied to the spaceless and timeless Infinite, but it cannot be applied even to a Time Infinite or a Space Infinite. A law and process binding for our superficial being need not be binding on what is occult within us. Again, our intellect, founding itself on reason, finds it difficult to deal with what is infrarational; life is infrarational and we find that our intellectual reason applying itself to life is constantly forcing upon it a control, a measure, an artificial procrustean rule that either succeeds in killing or petri-

fying life or constrains it into rigid forms and conventions that lame and imprison its capacity or ends by a bungle, a revolt of life, a decay or disruption of the systems and superstructures built upon it by our intelligence. An instinct, an intuition is needed which the intellect has not at its command and does not always listen to when it comes in of itself to help the mental working. But still more difficult must it be for our reason to understand and deal with the suprarational; the suprarational is the realm of the spirit, and in the largeness, subtlety, profundity, complexity of its movement the reason is lost; here intuition and inner experience alone are the guide, or, if there is any other, it is that of which intuition is only a sharp edge, an intense projected ray, — the final enlightenment must come from the suprarational Truth-Consciousness, from a supramental vision and knowledge.

But the being and action of the Infinite must not be therefore regarded as if it were a magic void of all reason; there is, on the contrary, a greater reason in all the operations of the Infinite, but it is not a mental or intellectual, it is a spiritual and supramental reason: there is a logic in it, because there are relations and connections infallibly seen and executed; what is magic to our finite reason is the logic of the Infinite. It is a greater reason, a greater logic because it is more vast, subtle, complex in its operations: it comprehends all the data which our observation fails to seize, it deduces from them results which neither our deduction nor induction can anticipate, because our conclusions and inferences have a meagre foundation and are fallible and brittle. If we observe a happening, we judge and explain it from the result and from a glimpse of its most external constituents, circumstances or causes; but each happening is the outcome of a complex nexus of forces which we do not and cannot observe, because all forces are to us invisible, — but they are not invisible to the spiritual vision of the Infinite: some of them are actualities working to produce or occasion a new actuality, some are possibles that are near to the pre-existent actuals and in a way included in their aggregate; but there can intervene always new possibilities that suddenly become dynamic potentials and add themselves to the nexus, and behind all are imperatives or an

imperative which these possibilities are labouring to actualise. Moreover, out of the same nexus of forces different results are possible; what will come out of them is determined by a sanction which was no doubt waiting and ready all the time but seems to come in rapidly to intervene and alter everything, a decisive divine imperative. All this our reason cannot grasp because it is the instrument of an ignorance with a very limited vision and a small stock of accumulated and not always very certain or reliable knowledge and because too it has no means of direct awareness; for this is the difference between intuition and intellect, that intuition is born of a direct awareness while intellect is an indirect action of a knowledge which constructs itself with difficulty out of the unknown from signs and indications and gathered data. But what is not evident to our reason and senses, is self-evident to the Infinite Consciousness, and, if there is a Will of the Infinite, it must be a Will that acts in this full knowledge and is the perfect spontaneous result of a total self-evidence. It is neither a hampered evolutionary Force bound by what it has evolved nor an imaginative Will acting in the void upon a free caprice; it is the truth of the Infinite affirming itself in the determinations of the finite.

It is evident that such a Consciousness and Will need not act in harmony with the conclusions of our limited reason or according to a procedure familiar to it and approved of by our constructed notions or in subjection to an ethical reason working for a limited and fragmentary good; it might and does admit things deemed by our reason irrational and unethical because that was necessary for the final and total Good and for the working out of a cosmic purpose. What seems to us irrational or reprehensible in relation to a partial set of facts, motives, desiderata might be perfectly rational and approvable in relation to a much vaster motive and totality of data and desiderata. Reason with its partial vision sets up constructed conclusions which it strives to turn into general rules of knowledge and action and it compels into its rule by some mental device or gets rid of what does not suit with it: an infinite Consciousness would have no such rules, it would have instead large intrinsic truths governing automatically conclusion and result, but adapting them diffe-

rently and spontaneously to a different total of circumstances, so that by this pliability and free adaptation it might seem to the narrower faculty to have no standards whatever. In the same way, we cannot judge of the principle and dynamic operation of infinite being by the standards of finite existence, — what might be impossible for the one would be normal and self-evidently natural states and motives for the greater freer Reality. It is this that makes the difference between our fragmentary mind consciousness constructing integers out of its fractions and an essential and total consciousness, vision and knowledge. It is not indeed possible, so long as we are compelled to use reason as our main support, for it to abdicate altogether in favour of an undeveloped or half-organised intuition; but it is imperative on us in a consideration of the Infinite and its being and action to enforce on our reason an utmost plasticity and open it to an awareness of the larger states and possibilities of that which we are striving to consider. It will not do to apply our limited and limiting conclusions to That which is illimitable. If we concentrate only on one aspect and treat it as the whole, we illustrate the story of the blind men and the elephant; each of the blind inquirers touched a different part and concluded that the whole animal was some object resembling the part of which he had had the touch. An experience of some one aspect of the Infinite is valid in itself; but we cannot generalise from it that the Infinite is that alone, nor would it be safe to view the rest of the Infinite in the terms of that aspect and exclude all other viewpoints of spiritual experience. The Infinite is at once an essentiality, a boundless totality and a multitude; all these have to be known in order to know truly the Infinite. To see the parts alone and the totality not at all or only as a sum of the parts is a knowledge, but also at the same time an ignorance; to see the totality alone and ignore the parts is also a knowledge and at the same time an ignorance, for a part may be greater than the whole because it belongs to the transcendence; to see the essence alone because it takes us back straight towards the transcendence and negate the totality and the parts is a penultimate knowledge, but here too there is a capital ignorance. A whole knowledge must be there and the reason must become plastic enough to look

at all sides, all aspects and seek through them for that in which they are one.

Thus too, if we see only the aspect of Self, we may concentrate on its static silence and miss the dynamic truth of the Infinite; if we see only the Ishwara, we may seize the dynamic truth but miss the eternal status and the infinite silence, become aware of only dynamic being, dynamic consciousness, dynamic delight of being, but miss the pure existence, pure consciousness, pure bliss of being. If we concentrate on Purusha-Prakriti alone, we may see only the dichotomy of Soul and Nature, Spirit and Matter, and miss their unity. In considering the action of the Infinite we have to avoid the error of the disciple who thought of himself as the Brahman, refused to obey the warning of the elephant-driver to budge from the narrow path and was taken up by the elephant's trunk and removed out of the way; "You are no doubt the Brahman," said the master to his bewildered disciple, "but why did you not obey the driver Brahman and get out of the path of the elephant Brahman?" We must not commit the mistake of emphasising one side of the Truth and concluding from it or acting upon it to the exclusion of all other sides and aspects of the Infinite. The realisation "I am That" is true, but we cannot safely proceed on it unless we realise also that all is That; our self-existence is a fact, but we must also be aware of other selves, of the same Self in other beings and of That which exceeds both own-self and other-self. The Infinite is one in a multiplicity and its action is only seizable by a supreme Reason which regards all and acts as a one-awareness that observes itself in difference and respects its own differences, so that each thing and each being has its form of essential being and its form of dynamic nature, *svarūpa*, *svadharma*, and all are respected in the total working. The knowledge and action of the Infinite is one in an unbound variability: it would be from the point of view of the infinite Truth equally an error to insist either on a sameness of action in all circumstances or on a diversity of action without any unifying truth and harmony behind the diversity. In our own principle of conduct, if we sought to act in this greater Truth, it would be equally an error to insist on our self alone or to insist on other selves alone; it is the Self of all on which we have to found

a unity of action and a total, infinitely plastic yet harmonious diversity of action; for that is the nature of the working of the Infinite.

If we look from this viewpoint of a larger more plastic reason, taking account of the logic of the Infinite, at the difficulties which meet our intelligence when it tries to conceive the absolute and omnipresent Reality, we shall see that the whole difficulty is verbal and conceptual and not real. Our intelligence looks at its concept of the Absolute and sees that it must be indeterminable and at the same time it sees a world of determinations which emanates from the Absolute and exists in it, — for it can emanate from nowhere else and can exist nowhere else; it is further baffled by the affirmation, also hardly disputable on the premisses, that all these determinates are nothing else than this very indeterminable Absolute. But the contradiction disappears when we understand that the indeterminability is not in its true sense negative, not an imposition of incapacity on the Infinite, but positive, a freedom within itself from limitation by its own determinations and necessarily a freedom from all external determination by anything not itself, since there is no real possibility of such a not-self coming into existence. The Infinite is illimitably free, free to determine itself infinitely, free from all restraining effect of its own creations. In fact the Infinite does not create, it manifests what is in itself, in its own essence of reality; it is itself that essence of all reality and all realities are powers of that one Reality. The Absolute neither creates nor is created, — in the current sense of making or being made; we can speak of creation only in the sense of the Being becoming in form and movement what it already is in substance and status. Yet we have to emphasise its indeterminability in that special and positive sense, not as a negation but as an indispensable condition of its free infinite self-determination, because without that the Reality would be a fixed eternal determinate or else an indeterminate fixed and bound to a sum of possibilities of determination inherent within it. Its freedom from all limitation, from any binding by its own creation cannot be itself turned into a limitation, an absolute incapacity, a denial of all freedom of self-determination; it is this that would be a contradiction, it would be an attempt to define

and limit by negation the infinite and illimitable. Into the central fact of the two sides of the nature of the Absolute, the essential and the self-creative or dynamic, no real contradiction enters; it is only a pure infinite essence that can formulate itself in infinite ways. One statement is complementary to the other, there is no mutual cancellation, no incompatibility; it is only the dual statement of a single inescapable fact by human reason in human language.

The same conciliation occurs everywhere, when we look with a straight and accurate look on the truth of the Reality. In our experience of it we become aware of an Infinite essentially free from all limitation by qualities, properties, features; on the other hand, we are aware of an Infinite teeming with innumerable qualities, properties, features. Here again the statement of illimitable freedom is positive, not negative; it does not negate what we see, but on the contrary provides the indispensable condition for it, it makes possible a free and infinite self-expression in quality and feature. A quality is the character of a power of conscious being; or we may say that the consciousness of being expressing what is in it makes the power it brings out recognisable by a native stamp on it which we call quality or character. Courage as a quality is such a power of being, it is a certain character of my consciousness expressing a formulated force of my being, bringing out or creating a definite kind of force of my nature in action. So too the power of a drug to cure is its property, a special force of being native to the herb or mineral from which it is produced, and this speciality is determined by the Real-Idea concealed in the involved consciousness which dwells in the plant or mineral; the idea brings out in it what was there at the root of its manifestation and has now come out thus empowered as the force of its being. All qualities, properties, features are such powers of conscious being thus put forth from itself by the Absolute; It has everything within It, It has the free power to put all forth[1]; yet we cannot define the Absolute as a quality of courage or a power of healing, we cannot even say that these are a characteristic feature of the Absolute, nor can we make up a

[1] The word for creation in Sanskrit means a loosing or putting forth of what is in the being.

sum of qualities and say "that is the Absolute". But neither can we speak of the Absolute as a pure blank incapable of manifesting these things; on the contrary, all capacity is there, the powers of all qualities and characters are there inherent within it. The mind is in a difficulty because it has to say, "The Absolute or Infinite is none of these things, these things are not the Absolute or Infinite" and at the same time it has to say, "The Absolute is all these things, they are not something else than That, for That is the sole existence and the all-existence." Here it is evident that it is an undue finiteness of thought conception and verbal expression which creates the difficulty, but there is in reality none; for it would be evidently absurd to say that the Absolute is courage or curing-power, or to say that courage and curing-power are the Absolute, but it would be equally absurd to deny the capacity of the Absolute to put forth courage or curing-power as self-expressions in its manifestation. When the logic of the finite fails us, we have to see with a direct and unbound vision what is behind in the logic of the Infinite. We can then realise that the Infinite is infinite in quality, feature, power, but that no sum of qualities, features, powers can describe the Infinite.

We see that the Absolute, the Self, the Divine, the Spirit, the Being is One; the Transcendental is one, the Cosmic is one: but we see also that beings are many and each has a self, a spirit, a like yet different nature. And since the spirit and essence of things is one, we are obliged to admit that all these many must be that One, and it follows that the One is or has become many; but how can the limited or relative be the Absolute and how can man or beast or bird be the Divine Being? But in erecting this apparent contradiction the mind makes a double error. It is thinking in the terms of the mathematical finite unit which is sole in limitation, the one which is less than two and can become two only by division and fragmentation or by addition and multiplication; but this is an infinite Oneness, it is the essential and infinite Oneness which can contain the hundred and the thousand and the million and billion and trillion. Whatever astronomic or more than astronomic figures you heap and multiply, they cannot overpass or exceed that Oneness; for, in the language of the Upanishad, it moves not, yet is always far in front when you would

pursue and seize it. It can be said of it that it would not be the infinite Oneness if it were not capable of an infinite multiplicity; but that does not mean that the One is plural or can be limited or described as the sum of the Many: on the contrary, it can be the infinite Many because it exceeds all limitation or description by multiplicity and exceeds at the same time all limitation by finite conceptual oneness. Pluralism is an error because, though there is the spiritual plurality, the many souls are dependent and interdependent existences; their sum also is not the One nor is it the cosmic totality; they depend on the One and exist by its Oneness: yet the plurality is not unreal, it is the One Soul that dwells as the individual in these many souls and they are eternal in the One and by the one Eternal. This is difficult for the mental reason which makes an opposition between the Infinite and the finite and associates finiteness with plurality and infinity with oneness; but in the logic of the Infinite there is no such opposition and the eternity of the Many in the One is a thing that is perfectly natural and possible.

Again, we see that there is an infinite pure status and immobile silence of the Spirit; we see too that there is a boundless movement of the Spirit, a power, a dynamic spiritual all-containing self-extension of the Infinite. Our conceptions foist upon this perception, in itself valid and accurate, an opposition between the silence and status and the dynamis and movement, but to the reason and the logic of the Infinite there can be no such opposition. A solely silent and static Infinite, an Infinite without an infinite power and dynamis and energy is inadmissible except as the perception of an aspect; a powerless Absolute, an impotent Spirit is unthinkable: an infinite energy must be the dynamis of the Infinite, an all-power must be the potency of the Absolute, an illimitable force must be the force of the Spirit. But the silence, the status are the basis of the movement, an eternal immobility is the necessary condition, field, essence even, of the infinite mobility, a stable being is the condition and foundation of the vast action of the Force of being. It is when we arrive at something of this silence, stability, immobility that we can base on it a force and energy which in our superficial restless state would be inconceivable. The opposition we make is mental and con-

ceptual; in reality, the silence of the Spirit and the dynamis of the Spirit are complementary truths and inseparable. The immutable silent Spirit may hold its infinite energy silent and immobile within it, for it is not bound by its own forces, is not their subject or instrument, but it does possess them, does release them, is capable of an eternal and infinite action, does not weary or need to stop, and yet all the time its silent immobility inherent in its action and movement is not for a moment shaken or disturbed or altered by its action and movement; the witness silence of the Spirit is there in the very grain of all the voices and workings of Nature. These things may be difficult for us to understand because our own surface finite capacity in either direction is limited and our conceptions are based on our limitations; but it should be easy to see that these relative and finite conceptions do not apply to the Absolute and Infinite.

Our conception of the Infinite is formlessness, but everywhere we see form and forms surrounding us and it can be and is affirmed of the Divine Being that he is at once Form and the Formless. For here too the apparent contradiction does not correspond to a real opposition; the Formless is not a negation of the power of formation, but the condition for the Infinite's free formation: for otherwise there would be a single Form or only a fixity or sum of possible forms in a finite universe. The formlessness is the character of the spiritual essence, the spirit-substance of the Reality; all finite realities are powers, forms, self-shapings of that substance: the Divine is formless and nameless, but by that very reason capable of manifesting all possible names and shapes of being. Forms are manifestations, not arbitrary inventions out of nothing; for line and colour, mass and design which are the essentials of form carry always in them a significance, are, it might be said, secret values and significances of an unseen reality made visible; it is for that reason that figure, line, hue, mass, composition can embody what would be otherwise unseen, can convey what would be otherwise occult to the sense. Form may be said to be the innate body, the inevitable self-revelation of the formless, and this is true not only of external shapes, but of the unseen formations of mind and life which we seize only by our thought and those sensible forms of which only

the subtle grasp of the inner consciousness can become aware. Name in its deeper sense is not the word by which we describe the object, but the total of power, quality, character of the reality which a form of things embodies and which we try to sum up by a designating sound, a knowable name, *Nomen. Nomen* in this sense, we might say, is *Numen*; the secret Names of the Gods are their power, quality, character of being caught up by the consciousness and made conceivable. The Infinite is nameless, but in that namelessness all possible names, Numens of the gods, the names and forms of all realities, are already envisaged and prefigured, because they are there latent and inherent in the All-Existence.

It becomes clear from these considerations that the co-existence of the Infinite and the finite, which is the very nature of universal being, is not a juxtaposition or mutual inclusion of two opposites, but as natural and inevitable as the relation of the principle of Light and Fire with the suns. The finite is a frontal aspect and a self-determination of the Infinite; no finite can exist in itself and by itself, it exists by the Infinite and because it is of one essence with the Infinite. For by the Infinite we do not mean solely an illimitable self-extension in Space and Time, but something that is also spaceless and timeless, a self-existent Indefinable and Illimitable which can express itself in the infinitesimal as well as in the vast, in a second of time, in a point of space, in a passing circumstance. The finite is looked upon as a division of the Indivisible, but there is no such thing: for this division is only apparent; there is a demarcation, but no real separation is possible. When we see with the inner vision and sense and not with the physical eye a tree or other object, what we become aware of is an infinite one Reality constituting the tree or object, pervading its every atom and molecule, forming them out of itself, building the whole nature, process of becoming, operation of indwelling energy; all of these are itself, are this infinite, this Reality: we see it extending indivisibly and uniting all objects so that none is really separate from it or quite separate from other objects. "It stands," says the Gita, "undivided in beings and yet as if divided." Thus each object is that Infinite and one in essential being with all other objects that

are also forms and names,—powers, numens,—of the Infinite.

This incoercible unity in all divisions and diversities is the mathematics of the Infinite, indicated in a verse of the Upanishads,—"This is the complete and That is the complete; subtract the complete from the complete, the complete is the remainder." For so too it may be said of the infinite self-multiplication of the Reality that all things are that self-multiplication; the One becomes Many, but all these Many are That which was already and is always itself and in becoming the Many remains the One. There is no division of the One by the appearance of the finite, for it is the one Infinite that appears to us as the many finite: the creation adds nothing to the Infinite; it remains after creation what it was before. The Infinite is not a sum of things, it is That which is all things and more. If this logic of the Infinite contradicts the conceptions of our finite reason, it is because it exceeds it and does not base itself on the data of the limited phenomenon, but embraces the Reality and sees the truth of all phenomena in the truth of the Reality; it does not see them as separate beings, movements, names, forms, things; for that they cannot be, since they could be that only if they were phenomena in the Void, things without a common basis or essence, fundamentally unconnected, connected only by coexistence and pragmatic relation, not realities which exist by their root of unity and, so far as they can be considered independent, are secured in their independence of outer or inner figure and movement only by their perpetual dependence on their parent Infinite, their secret identity with the one Identical. The Identical is their root, their cause of form, the one power of their varying powers, their constituting substance.

The Identical to our notions is the Immutable; it is ever the same through eternity, for if it is or becomes subject to mutation or if it admits of differences, it ceases to be identical; but what we see everywhere is an infinitely variable fundamental oneness which seems the very principle of Nature. The basic Force is one, but it manifests from itself innumerable forces; the basic substance is one, but it develops many different substances and millions of unlike objects; mind is one but differentiates itself into many mental states, mind-formations, thoughts,

perceptions differing from each other and entering into harmony or into conflict; life is one, but the forms of life are unlike and innumerable; humanity is one in nature, but there are different race types and every individual man is himself and in some way unlike others; Nature insists on tracing lines of difference on the leaves of one tree; she drives differentiation so far that it has been found that the lines on one man's thumb are different from the lines of every other man's thumb so that he can be identified by that differentiation alone, — yet fundamentally all men are alike and there is no essential difference. Oneness or sameness is everywhere, differentiation is everywhere; the indwelling Reality has built the universe on the principle of the development of one seed into a million different fashions. But this again is the logic of the Infinite; because the essence of the Reality is immutably the same, it can assume securely these innumerable differences of form and character and movement, for even if they were multiplied a trillionfold, that would not affect the underlying immutability of the eternal Identical. Because the Self and Spirit in things and beings is one everywhere, therefore Nature can afford this luxury of infinite differentiation: if there were not this secure basis which brings it about that nothing changes yet all changes, all her workings and creations would in this play collapse into disintegration and chaos; there would be nothing to hold her disparate movements and creations together. The immutability of the Identical does not consist in a monotone of changeless sameness incapable of variation; it consists in an unchangeableness of being which is capable of endless formation of being, but which no differentiation can destroy or impair or minimise. The Self becomes insect and bird and beast and man, but it is always the same Self through these mutations because it is the One who manifests himself infinitely in endless diversity. Our surface reason is prone to conclude that the diversity may be unreal, an appearance only, but if we look a little deeper we shall see that a real diversity brings out the real Unity, shows it as it were in its utmost capacity, reveals all that it can be and is in itself, delivers from its whiteness of hue the many tones of colour that are fused together there; Oneness finds itself infinitely in what seems to us to be a falling

away from its oneness, but is really an inexhaustible diverse display of unity. This is the miracle, the Maya of the universe, yet perfectly logical, natural and a matter of course to the self-vision and self-experience of the Infinite.

For the Maya of Brahman is at once the magic and the logic of an infinitely variable Oneness; if, indeed, there were only a rigid monotone of limited oneness and sameness, there would be no place for reason and logic, for logic consists in the right perception of relations: the highest work of reason is to find the one substance, the one law, the cementing latent reality connecting and unifying the many, the different, the discordant and disparate. All universal existence moves between these two terms, a diversification of the One, a unification of the many and diverse, and that must be because the One and the Many are fundamental aspects of the Infinite. For what the divine Self-knowledge and All-knowledge brings out in its manifestation must be a truth of its being and the play of that truth is its Lila.

This, then, is the logic of the way of universal being of Brahman and the basic working of the reason, the infinite intelligence of Maya. As with the being of Brahman, so with its consciousness, Maya: it is not bound to a finite restriction of itself or to one state or law of its action; it can be many things simultaneously, have many co-ordinated movements which to the finite reason may seem contradictory; it is one but innumerably manifold, infinitely plastic, inexhaustibly adaptable. Maya is the supreme and universal consciousness and force of the Eternal and Infinite and, being by its very nature unbound and illimitable, it can put forth many states of consciousness at a time, many dispositions of its Force, without ceasing to be the same consciousness-force for ever. It is at once transcendental, universal and individual; it is the supreme supracosmic Being that is aware of itself as All-Being, as the Cosmic Self, as the Consciousness-Force of cosmic Nature, and at the same time experiences itself as the individual being and consciousness in all existences. The individual consciousness can see itself as limited and separate, but can also put off its limitations and know itself as universal and again as transcendent of the universe; this is because there is in all these states or positions or underlying them

the same triune consciousness in a triple status. There is then no difficulty in the One thus seeing or experiencing itself triply, whether from above in the Transcendent Existence or from between in the Cosmic Self or from below in the individual conscious being. All that is necessary for this to be accepted as natural and logical is to admit that there can be different real statuses of consciousness of the One Being, and that cannot be impossible for an Existence which is free and infinite and cannot be tied to a single condition; a free power of self-variation must be natural to a consciousness that is infinite. If the possibility of a manifold status of consciousness is admitted, no limit can be put to the ways of its variation of status, provided the One is aware of itself simultaneously in all of them; for the One and Infinite must be thus universally conscious. The only difficulty, which a further consideration may solve, is to understand the connections between a status of limited or constructed consciousness like ours, a status of ignorance, and the infinite self-knowledge and all-knowledge.

A second possibility of the Infinite Consciousness that must be admitted is its power of self-limitation or secondary self-formation into a subordinate movement within the integral illimitable consciousness and knowledge; for that is a necessary consequence of the power of self-determination of the Infinite. Each self-determination of the self-being must have its own awareness of its self-truth and its self-nature; or, if we prefer so to put it, the Being in that determination must be so self-aware. Spiritual individuality means that each individual self or spirit is a centre of self-vision and all-vision; the circumference, — the boundless circumference, as we may say, — of this vision may be the same for all, but the centre may be different, — not located as in a spatial point in a spatial circle, but a psychological centre related with others through a co-existence of the diversely conscious Many in the universal being. Each being in a world will see the same world, but see it from its own self-being according to its own way of self-nature: for each will manifest its own truth of the Infinite, its own way of self-determination and of meeting the cosmic determinations; its vision by the law of unity in variety will no doubt be

fundamentally the same as that of others, but it will still develop its own differentiation, — as we see all human beings conscious in the one human way of the same cosmic things, yet always with an individual difference. This self-limitation would be, not fundamental, but an individual specialisation of a common universality or totality; the spiritual individual would act from his own centre of the one Truth and according to his self-nature, but on a common basis and not with any blindness to other-self and other-nature. It would be consciousness limiting its action with full knowledge, not a movement of ignorance. But apart from this individualising self-limitation, there must also be in the consciousness of the Infinite a power of cosmic limitation; it must be able to limit its action so as to base a given world or universe and to keep it in its own order, harmony, self-building: for the creation of a universe necessitates a special determination of the Infinite Consciousness to preside over that world and a holding back of all that is not needed for that movement. In the same way the putting forth of an independent action of some power like Mind, Life or Matter must have as its support a similar principle of self-limitation. It cannot be said that such a movement must be impossible for the Infinite, because it is illimitable; on the contrary, this must be one of its many powers, for its powers too are illimitable: but this also, like other self-determinations, other finite buildings, would not be a separation or a real division, for all the Infinite Consciousness would be around and behind it and supporting it and the special movement itself would be intrinsically aware not only of itself, but, in essence, of all that was behind it. This would be so, inevitably, in the integral consciousness of the Infinite: but we can suppose also that an intrinsic though not an active awareness of this kind, demarcating itself, yet indivisible, might be there too in the total self-consciousness of the movement of the Finite. This much cosmic or individual conscious self-limitation would evidently be possible to the Infinite and can be accepted by a larger reason as one of its spiritual possibilities; but so far, on this basis, any division or ignorant separation or binding and blinding limitation such as is apparent in our own consciousness would be unaccountable.

But a third power or possibility of the Infinite Consciousness can be admitted, its power of self-absorption, of plunging into itself, into a state in which self-awareness exists but not as knowledge and not as all-knowledge; the all would then be involved in pure self-awareness, and knowledge and the inner consciousness itself would be lost in pure being. This is, luminously, the state which we call the Superconscience in an absolute sense, — although most of what we call superconscient is in reality not that but only a higher conscient, something that is conscious to itself and only superconscious to our own limited level of awareness. This self-absorption, this trance of infinity is again, no longer luminously but darkly, the state which we call the Inconscient; for the being of the Infinite is there though by its appearance of inconscience it seems to us rather to be an infinite non-being: a self-oblivious intrinsic consciousness and force are there in that apparent non-being, for by the energy of the Inconscient an ordered world is created; it is created in a trance of self-absorption, the force acting automatically and with an apparent blindness as in a trance, but still with the inevitability and power of truth of the Infinite. If we take a step further and admit that a special or a restricted and partial action of self-absorption is possible to the Infinite, an action not always of its infinity concentrated limitlessly in itself, but confined to a special status or to an individual or cosmic self-determination, we have then the explanation of the concentrated condition or status by which it becomes aware separately of one aspect of its being. There can then be a fundamental double status such as that of the Nirguna standing back from the Saguna and absorbed in its own purity and immobility, while the rest is held back behind a veil and not admitted within that special status. In the same way we could account for the status of consciousness aware of one field of being or one movement of it, while the awareness of all the rest would be held behind and veiled or, as it were, cut off by a waking trance of dynamic concentration from the specialised or limited awareness occupied only with its own field or movement. The totality of the infinite consciousness would be there, not abolished, recoverable, but not evidently active, active only by implication, by inherence or by the instrumentality of

the limited awareness, not in its own manifest power and presence. It will be evident that all these three powers can be accepted as possible to the dynamics of the Infinite Consciousness, and it is by considering the many ways in which they can work that we may get a clue to the operations of Maya.

This throws light incidentally on the opposition made by our minds between pure consciousness, pure existence, pure bliss and the abundant activity, the manifold application, the endless vicissitudes of being, consciousness and delight of being that take place in the universe. In the state of pure consciousness and pure being we are aware of that only, simple, immutable, self-existent, without form or object, and we feel that to be alone true and real. In the other or dynamic state we feel its dynamism to be perfectly true and natural and are even capable of thinking that no such experience as that of pure consciousness is possible. Yet it is now evident that to the Infinite Consciousness both the static and the dynamic are possible; these are two of its statuses and both can be present simultaneously in the universal awareness, the one witnessing the other and supporting it or not looking at it and yet automatically supporting it; or the silence and status may be there penetrating the activity or throwing it up like an ocean immobile below throwing up a mobility of waves on its surface. This is also the reason why it is possible for us in certain conditions of our being to be aware of several different states of consciousness at the same time. There is a state of being experienced in Yoga in which we become a double consciousness, one on the surface, small, active, ignorant, swayed by thoughts and feelings, grief and joy and all kinds of reactions, the other within calm, vast, equal, observing the surface being with an immovable detachment or indulgence or, it may be, acting upon its agitation to quiet, enlarge, transform it. So too we can rise to a consciousness above and observe the various parts of our being, inner and outer, mental, vital and physical and the subconscient below all, and act upon one or other or the whole from that higher status. It is possible also to go down from that height or from any height into any of these lower states and take its limited light or its obscurity as our place of working while the rest that we are is either temporarily put

away or put behind or else kept as a field of reference from which we can get support, sanction or light and influence or as a status into which we can ascend or recede and from it observe the inferior movements. Or we can plunge into trance, get within ourselves and be conscious there while all outward things are excluded; or we can go beyond even this inner awareness and lose ourselves in some deeper other consciousness or some high superconscience. There is also a pervading equal consciousness into which we can enter and see all ourselves with one enveloping glance or omnipresent awareness one and indivisible. All this which looks strange and abnormal or may seem fantastic to the surface reason acquainted only with our normal status of limited ignorance and its movements divided from our inner higher and total reality, becomes easily intelligible and admissible in the light of the larger reason and logic of the Infinite or by the admission of the greater illimitable powers of the Self, the Spirit in us which is of one essence with the Infinite.

Brahman the Reality is the self-existent Absolute and Maya is the Consciousness and Force of this self-existence; but with regard to the universe Brahman appears as the Self of all existence, Atman, the cosmic Self, but also as the Supreme Self transcendent of its own cosmicity and at the same time individual-universal in each being; Maya can then be seen as the self-power, Atma-Shakti, of the Atman. It is true that when we first become aware of this aspect, it is usually in a silence of the whole being or at the least in a silence within which draws back or stands away from the surface action; this Self is then felt as a status in silence, an immobile immutable being, self-existent, pervading the whole universe, omnipresent in all, but not dynamic or active, aloof from the ever mobile energy of Maya. In the same way we can become aware of it as the Purusha, separate from Prakriti, the Conscious Being standing back from the activities of Nature. But this is an exclusive concentration which limits itself to a spiritual status and puts away from it all activity in order to realise the freedom of Brahman the self-existent Reality from all limitation by its own action and manifestation: it is an essential realisation, but not the total realisation. For we can see that the Conscious-Power, the Shakti that acts and

creates, is not other than the Maya or all-knowledge of Brahman; it is the Power of the Self; Prakriti is the working of the Purusha, Conscious Being active by its own Nature: the duality then of Soul and World-Energy, silent Self and the creative Power of the Spirit, is not really something dual and separate, it is biune. As we cannot separate Fire and the power of Fire, it has been said, so we cannot separate the Divine Reality and its Consciousness-Force, Chit-Shakti. This first realisation of Self as something intensely silent and purely static is not the whole truth of it, there can also be a realisation of Self in its power, Self as the condition of world-activity and world-existence. However, the Self is a fundamental aspect of Brahman, but with a certain stress on its impersonality; therefore the Power of the Self has the appearance of a Force that acts automatically with the Self sustaining it, witness and support and originator and enjoyer of its activities but not involved in them for a moment. As soon as we become aware of the Self, we are conscious of it as eternal, unborn, unembodied, uninvolved in its workings: it can be felt within the form of being, but also as enveloping it, as above it, surveying its embodiment from above, *adhyakṣa*; it is omnipresent, the same in everything, infinite and pure and intangible for ever. This Self can be experienced as the Self of the individual, the Self of the thinker, doer, enjoyer, but even so it always has this greater character; its individuality is at the same time a vast universality or very readily passes into that, and the next step to that is a sheer transcendence or a complete and ineffable passing into the Absolute. The Self is that aspect of the Brahman in which it is intimately felt as at once individual, cosmic, transcendent of the universe. The realisation of the Self is the straight and swift way towards individual liberation, a static universality, a Nature-transcendence. At the same time there is a realisation of Self in which it is felt not only sustaining and pervading and enveloping all things, but constituting everything and identified in a free identity with all its becomings in Nature. Even so, freedom and impersonality are always the character of the Self. There is no appearance of subjection to the workings of its own Power in the universe, such as the apparent subjection of the Purusha to Prakriti. To realise the Self is to realise the eternal freedom of the Spirit.

The Conscious Being, Purusha, is the Self as originator, witness, support and lord and enjoyer of the forms and works of Nature. As the aspect of Self is in its essential character transcendental even when involved and identified with its universal and individual becomings, so the Purusha aspect is characteristically universal-individual and intimately connected with Nature even when separated from her. For this conscious Spirit while retaining its impersonality and eternity, its universality, puts on at the same time a more personal aspect[1]; it is the impersonal-personal being in Nature from whom it is not altogether detached, for it is always coupled with her: Nature acts for the Purusha and by its sanction, for its will and pleasure; the Conscious Being imparts its consciousness to the Energy we call Nature, receives in that consciousness her workings as in a mirror, accepts the forms which she, the executive cosmic Force, creates and imposes on it, gives or withdraws its sanction from her movements. The experience of Purusha-Prakriti, the Spirit or Conscious Being in its relations to Nature, is of immense pragmatic importance; for on these relations the whole play of the consciousness depends in the embodied being. If the Purusha in us is passive and allows Nature to act, accepting all she imposes on him, giving a constant automatic sanction, then the soul in mind, life, body, the mental, vital, physical being in us, becomes subject to our nature, ruled by its formation, driven by its activities; that is the normal state of our ignorance. If the Purusha in us becomes aware of itself as the Witness and stands back from Nature, that is the first step to the soul's freedom; for it becomes detached, and it is possible then to know Nature and her processes and in all independence, since we are no longer involved in her works, to accept or not to accept, to make the sanction no longer automatic but free and effective; we can choose what she shall do or not do in us, or we can stand back altogether from her works and withdraw easily into the Self's spiritual silence, or we can reject her present formations and rise to a spiritual level of existence and from there re-create our

[1] The Sankhya philosophy stresses this personal aspect, makes the Purusha many, plural, and assigns universality to Nature; in this view each soul is an independent existence although all souls experience a common universal Nature.

existence. The Purusha can cease to be subject, *anīśa*, and become lord of its nature, *īśvara*.

In the philosophy of the Sankhyas we find developed most thoroughly the metaphysical idea of Purusha-Prakriti. These two are eternally separate entities, but in relation to each other. Prakriti is Nature-power, an executive Power, it is Energy apart from Consciousness; for Consciousness belongs to the Purusha, Prakriti without Purusha is inert, mechanical, inconscient. Prakriti develops as its formal self and basis of action primal Matter and in it manifests life and sense and mind and intelligence; but intelligence too, since it is part of Nature and its product in primal Matter, is also inert, mechanical, inconscient, — a conception which sheds a certain light on the order and perfectly related workings of the Inconscient in the material universe: it is the light of the soul, the Spirit, that is imparted to the mechanical workings of sense-mind and intelligence, they become conscious by its consciousness, even as they become active only by the assent of the spirit. The Purusha becomes free by drawing back from Prakriti; it becomes master of her by refusing to be involved in Matter. Nature acts by three principles, modes or qualities of its stuff and its action, which in us become the fundamental modes of our psychological and physical substance and its workings, the principle of inertia, the principle of kinesis and the principle of balance, light and harmony: when these are in unequal motion, her action takes place; when they fall into equilibrium she passes into quiescence. Purusha, conscious being, is plural, not one and single, while Nature is one: it would seem to follow that whatever principle of oneness we find in existence belongs to Nature, but each soul is independent and unique, sole to itself and separate whether in its enjoyment of Nature or its liberation from Nature. All these positions of the Sankhya we find to be perfectly valid in experience when we come into direct inner contact with the realities of individual soul and universal Nature; but they are pragmatic truths and we are not bound to accept them as the whole or the fundamental truth either of self or of Nature. Prakriti presents itself as an inconscient Energy in the material world, but, as the scale of consciousness rises, she reveals herself more and more as a conscious force and we per-

ceive that even her inconscience concealed a secret consciousness; so too conscious being is many in its individual souls, but in its self we can experience it as one in all and one in its own essential existence. Moreover, the experience of soul and Nature as dual is true, but the experience of their unity has also its validity. If Nature or Energy is able to impose its forms and workings on Being, it can only be because it is Nature or Energy of Being and so the Being can accept them as its own; if the Being can become lord of Nature, it must be because it is its own Nature which it has passively watched doing its work, but can control and master; even in its passivity its consent is necessary to the action of Prakriti and this relation shows sufficiently that the two are not alien to each other. The duality is a position taken up, a double status accepted for the operations of the self-manifestation of the being; but there is no eternal and fundamental separateness and dualism of Being and its Consciousness-Force, of the Soul and Nature.

It is the Reality, the Self, that takes the position of the Conscious Being regarding and accepting or ruling the works of its own Nature. An apparent duality is created in order that there may be a free action of Nature working itself out with the support of the Spirit and again a free and masterful action of the Spirit controlling and working out Nature. This duality is also necessary that the Spirit may be at any time at liberty to draw back from any formation of its Nature and dissolve all formation or accept or enforce a new or a higher formation. These are very evident possibilities of the Spirit in its dealings with its own Force and they can be observed and verified in our own experience; they are logical results of the powers of the Infinite Consciousness, powers which we have seen to be native to its infinity. The Purusha aspect and the Prakriti aspect go always together and whatever status Nature or Consciousness-Force in action assumes, manifests or develops, there is a corresponding status of the Spirit. In its supreme status the Spirit is the supreme Conscious Being, Purushottama, and the Consciousness-Force is his supreme Nature, Para-Prakriti. In each status of the gradations of Nature, the Spirit takes a poise of its being proper to that gradation; in Mind-Nature it becomes the mental being,

in Life-Nature it becomes the vital being, in nature of Matter it becomes the physical being, in Supermind it becomes the Being of Knowledge; in the supreme spiritual status it becomes the Being of Bliss and pure Existence. In us, in the embodied individual, it stands behind all as the psychic Entity, the inner Self supporting the other formulations of our consciousness and spiritual existence. The Purusha, individual in us, is cosmic in the cosmos, transcendent in the transcendence: the identity with the Self is apparent, but it is the Self in its pure impersonal-personal status of a Spirit in things and beings,—impersonal because undifferentiated by personal quality, personal because it presides over the individualisations of self in each individual,—which deals with the works of its Consciousness-Force, its executive force of self-nature, in whatever poise is necessary for that purpose.

But it is evident that whatever the posture taken or relation formed in any individual nodus of Purusha-Prakriti, the Being is in a fundamental cosmic relation lord or ruler of its nature: for even when it allows Nature to have its own way with it, its consent is necessary to support her workings. This comes out in its fullest revelation in the third aspect of the Reality, the Divine Being who is the master and creator of the universe. Here the supreme Person, the Being in its transcendental and cosmic consciousness and force, comes to the front, omnipotent, omniscient, the controller of all energies, the Conscious in all that is conscient or inconscient, the Inhabitant of all souls and minds and hearts and bodies, the Ruler or Overruler of all works, the Enjoyer of all delight, the Creator who has built all things in his own being, the All-Person of whom all beings are personalities, the Power from whom are all powers, the Self, the Spirit in all, by his being the Father of all that is, in his Consciousness-Force the Divine Mother, the Friend of all creatures, the All-blissful and All-beautiful of whom beauty and joy are the revelation, the All-Beloved and All-Lover. In a certain sense, so seen and understood, this becomes the most comprehensive of the aspects of the Reality, since here all are united in a single formulation; for the Ishwara is supracosmic as well as intracosmic; He is that which exceeds and inhabits and supports all individuality; He is

the supreme and universal Brahman, the Absolute, the supreme Self, the supreme Purusha.[1] But, very clearly, this is not the personal God of popular religions, a being limited by his qualities, individual and separate from all others; for all such personal gods are only limited representations or names and divine personalities of the one Ishwara. Neither is this the Saguna Brahman active and possessed of qualities, for that is only one side of the being of the Ishwara; the Nirguna immobile and without qualities is another aspect of His existence. Ishwara is Brahman the Reality, Self, Spirit, revealed as possessor, enjoyer of his own self-existence, creator of the universe and one with it, Pantheos, and yet superior to it, the Eternal, the Infinite, the Ineffable, the Divine Transcendence.

The sharp opposition made between personality and impersonality by our mental way of thinking is a creation of the mind based on the appearances of the material world; for here in terrestrial existence the Inconscient from which everything takes its origin appears as something entirely impersonal; Nature, the inconscient Energy, is entirely impersonal in her manifest essence and dealings; all Forces wear this mask of impersonality, all qualities and powers, Love and Delight and Consciousness itself, have this aspect. Personality makes its apparition as a creation of consciousness in an impersonal world; it is a limitation by a restricted formation of powers, qualities, habitual forces of the nature-action, an imprisonment in a limited circle of self-experience which we have to transcend, — to lose personality is necessary if we are to gain universality, still more necessary if we are to rise into the Transcendence. But what we thus call personality is only a formation of superficial consciousness; behind it is the Person who takes on various personalities, who can have at the same time many personalities but is himself one, real, eternal. If we look at things from a larger point of view, we might say that what is impersonal is only a power of the Person: existence itself has no meaning without an Existent, consciousness has no standing-place if there is none who is conscious, delight is useless and invalid without an enjoyer, love can have no foundation or fulfilment if there is no lover, all-power must be otiose if

[1] *Gita.*

there is not an Almighty. For what we mean by Person is conscious being; even if this emerges here as a term or product of the Inconscient, it is not that in reality: for it is the Inconscient itself that is a term of the secret Consciousness; what emerges is greater than that in which it emerges, as Mind is greater than Matter, Soul than Mind; Spirit, most secret of all, the supreme emergence, the last revelation, is the greatest of all, and Spirit is the Purusha, the All-Person, the omnipresent Conscious Being. It is the mind's ignorance of this true Person in us, its confusion of person with our experience of ego and limited personality, the misleading phenomenon of the emergence of limited consciousness and personality in an inconscient existence that have made us create an opposition between these two aspects of the Reality, but in truth there is no opposition. An eternal infinite self-existence is the supreme reality, but the supreme transcendent eternal Being, Self and Spirit, — an infinite Person, we may say, because his being is the essence and source of all personality, — is the reality and meaning of self-existence: so too the cosmic Self, Spirit, Being, Person is the reality and meaning of cosmic existence; the same Self, Spirit, Being or Person manifesting its multiplicity is the reality and meaning of individual existence.

If we admit the Divine Being, the supreme Person and All-Person as the Ishwara, a difficulty arises in understanding his rule or government of world-existence, because we immediately transfer to him our mental conception of a human ruler; we picture him as acting by the mind and mental will in an omnipotent arbitrary fashion upon a world on which he imposes his mental conceptions as laws, and we conceive of his will as a free caprice of his personality. But there is no need for the Divine Being to act by an arbitrary will or idea as an omnipotent yet ignorant human being, — if such an omnipotence were possible, — might do: for he is not limited by mind; he has an all-consciousness in which he is aware of the truth of all things and aware of his own all-wisdom working them out according to the truth that is in them, their significance, their possibility or necessity, the imperative selfness of their nature. The Divine is free and not bound by laws of any making, but still he acts by laws

and processes because they are the expression of the truth of things, — not their mechanical, mathematical or other outward truth alone, but the spiritual reality of what they are, what they have become and have yet to become, what they have it within themselves to realise. He is himself present in the working, but he also exceeds and can overrule it; for on one side Nature works according to her limited complex of formulas and is informed and supported in their execution by the Divine Presence, but on the other side there is an overseeing, a higher working and determination, even an intervention, free but not arbitrary, often appearing to us magical and miraculous because it proceeds and acts upon Nature from a divine Supernature: Nature here is a limited expression of that Supernature and open to intervention or mutation by its light, its force, its influence. The mechanical, mathematical, automatic law of things is a fact, but within it there is a spiritual law of consciousness at work which gives to the mechanical steps of Nature's forces an inner turn and value, a significant rightness and a secretly conscious necessity, and above it there is a spiritual freedom that knows and acts in the supreme and universal truth of the Spirit. Our view of the divine government of the world or of the secret of its action is either incurably anthropomorphic or else incurably mechanical; both the anthropomorphism and mechanism have their elements of truth, but they are only a side, an aspect, and the real truth is that the world is governed by the One in all and over all who is infinite in his consciousness and it is according to the law and logic of an infinite consciousness that we ought to understand the significance and building and movement of the universe.

If we regard this aspect of the one Reality and put it in close connection with the other aspects, we can get a complete view of the relation between the eternal Self-Existence and the dynamics of the Consciousness-Force by which it manifests the universe. If we place ourselves in a silent Self-existence immobile, static, inactive, it will appear that a conceptive Consciousness-Force, Maya, able to effectuate all its conceptions, a dynamic consort of the Self of silence, is doing everything; it takes its stand on the fixed unmoving eternal status and casts the spiritual substance of being into all manner of forms and movements to

which its passivity consents or in which it takes its impartial pleasure, its immobile delight of creative and mobile existence. Whether this be a real or an illusory existence, that must be its substance and significance. Consciousness is at play with Being, Force of Nature does what it wills with Existence and makes it the stuff of her creations, but secretly the consent of the Being must be there at every step to make this possible. There is an evident truth in this perception of things; it is what we see happening everywhere in us and around us; it is a truth of the universe and must answer to a fundamental truth-aspect of the Absolute. But when we step back from the outer dynamic appearances of things, not into a witness Silence, but into an inner dynamic participating experience of the Spirit, we find that this Consciousness-Force, Maya, Shakti, is itself the power of the Being, the Self-Existent, the Ishwara. The Being is lord of her and of all things, we see him doing everything in his own sovereignty as the creator and ruler of his own manifestation; or, if he stands back and allows freedom of action to the forces of Nature and her creatures, his sovereignty is still innate in the permission, at every step his tacit sanction, "Let it be so", *tathāstu*, is there implicit; for otherwise nothing could be done or happen. Being and its Consciousness-Force, Spirit and Nature cannot be fundamentally dual: what Nature does, is really done by the Spirit. This too is a truth that becomes evident when we go behind the veil and feel the presence of a living Reality which is everything and determines everything, is the All-powerful and the All-ruler; this too is a fundamental truth-aspect of the Absolute.

Again, if we remain absorbed in the Silence, the creative Consciousness and her works disappear into the Silence; Nature and the creation for us cease to exist or be real. On the other hand, if we look exclusively at the Being in its aspect of the sole-existent Person and Ruler, the Power or Shakti by which he does all things disappears into his uniqueness or becomes an attribute of His cosmic personality; the absolute monarchy of the one Being becomes our perception of the universe. Both these experiences create many difficulties for the mind due to its non-perception of the reality of the Self-Power whether in

quiescence or in action, or to a too exclusively negative experience of the Self, or to the too anthropomorphic character our conceptions attach to the Supreme Being as Ruler. It is evident that we are looking at an Infinite of which the Self-Power is capable of many movements, all of them valid. If we look again more largely and take account of both the impersonal and the personal truth of things as one truth, if in that light, the light of personality in impersonality, we see the biune aspect of Self and Self-Power, then in the Person Aspect a dual Person emerges, Ishwara-Shakti, the Divine Self and Creator and the Divine Mother and Creatrix of the universe; there becomes apparent to us the mystery of the masculine and feminine cosmic Principles whose play and interaction are necessary for all creation. In the superconscient truth of the Self-Existence these two are fused and implied in each other, one and indistinguishable, but in the spiritual-pragmatic truth of the dynamism of the universe, they emerge and become active; the Divine Mother-Energy as the universal creatrix, Maya, Para-Prakriti, Chit-Shakti, manifests the cosmic Self and Ishwara and her own self-power as a dual principle; it is through her that the Being, the Self, the Ishwara, acts and he does nothing except by her; though his Will is implicit in her, it is she who works out all as the supreme Consciousness-Force who holds all souls and beings within her and as executive Nature; all exists and acts according to Nature, all is the Consciousness-Force manifesting and playing with the Being in millions of forms and movements into which she casts his existence. If we draw back from her workings, then all can fall into quiescence and we can enter into the silence, because she consents to cease from her dynamic activity; but it is in her quiescence and silence that we are quiescent and cease. If we would affirm our independence of Nature, she reveals to us the supreme and omnipresent power of the Ishwara and ourselves as beings of his being, but that power is herself and we are that in her supernature. If we would realise a higher formation or status of being, then it is still through her, through the Divine Shakti, the Consciousness-Force of the Spirit that it has to be done; our surrender must be to the Divine Being through the Divine Mother: for it is towards or into the supreme Nature

that our ascension has to take place and it can only be done by the supramental Shakti taking up our mentality and transforming it into her supramentality. Thus we see that there is no contradiction or incompatibility between these three aspects of Existence, or between them in their eternal status and the three modes of its Dynamis working in the universe. One Being, one Reality as Self bases, supports, informs, as Purusha or Conscious Being experiences, as Ishwara wills, governs and possesses its world of manifestation created and kept in motion and action by its own Consciousness-Force or Self-Power, — Maya, Prakriti, Shakti.

A certain difficulty arises for our mind in reconciling these different faces or fronts of the One Self and Spirit, because we are obliged to use abstract conceptions and defining words and ideas for something that is not abstract, something that is spiritually living and intensely real. Our abstractions get fixed into differentiating concepts with sharp lines between them: but the Reality is not of that nature; its aspects are many but shade off into each other. Its truth could only be rendered by ideas and images metaphysical and yet living and concrete, — images which might be taken by the pure Reason as figures and symbols but are more than that and mean more to the intuitive vision and feeling, for they are realities of a dynamic spiritual experience. The impersonal truth of things can be rendered into the abstract formulas of the pure reason, but there is another side of truth which belongs to the spiritual or mystic vision and without that inner vision of realities the abstract formulation of them is insufficiently alive, incomplete. The mystery of things is the true truth of things; the intellectual presentation is only truth in representation, in abstract symbols, as if in a cubist art of thought-speech, in geometric figure. It is necessary in a philosophic inquiry to confine oneself mostly to this intellectual presentation, but it is as well to remember that this is only the abstraction of the Truth and to seize it completely or express it completely there is needed a concrete experience and a more living and full-bodied language.

Here it becomes opportune to see how in this aspect of the Reality we must regard the relation we have discovered between the One and the Many; this amounts to a determination of the

true connection between the individual and the Divine Being, between the Soul and the Ishwara. In the normal theistic conception the Many are created by God; made by him as a potter might make a vessel, they are dependent on him as are creatures on their creator. But in this larger view of the Ishwara the Many are themselves the Divine One in their inmost reality, individual selves of the supreme and universal Self-Existence, eternal as he is eternal but eternal in his being: our material existence is indeed a creation of Nature, but the soul is an immortal portion of the Divinity and behind it is the Divine Self in the natural creature. Still the One is the fundamental Truth of existence, the Many exist by the One and there is therefore an entire dependence of the manifested being on the Ishwara. This dependence is concealed by the separative ignorance of the ego which strives to exist in its own right, although at every step it is evidently dependent on the cosmic Power that created it, moved by it, a part of its cosmic being and action; this effort of the ego is clearly a misprision, an erroneous reflection of the truth of the self-existence that is within us. It is true that there is something in us, not in the ego but in the self and inmost being, that surpasses cosmic Nature and belongs to the Transcendence. But this too finds itself independent of Nature only by dependence on a higher Reality; it is through self-giving or surrender of soul and nature to the Divine Being that we can attain to our highest self and supreme Reality, for it is the Divine Being who is that highest self and that supreme Reality, and we are self-existent and eternal only in his eternity and by his self-existence. This dependence is not contradictory of the Identity, but is itself the door to the realisation of the Identity, — so that here again we meet that phenomenon of duality expressing unity, proceeding from unity and opening back into unity, which is the constant secret and fundamental operation of the universe. It is this truth of the consciousness of the Infinite that creates the possibility of all relations between the Many and the One, among which the realisation of oneness by the mind, the presence of oneness in the heart, the existence of oneness in all the members is a highest peak, and yet it does not annul but confirms all the other personal relations and gives them their fullness, their complete delight,

of immobile status, the other an eternity of motion in status.

The original status is that of the Reality timeless and spaceless; Space and Time would be the same Reality self-extended to contain the deployment of what was within it. The difference would be, as in all the other oppositions, the Spirit looking at itself in essence and principle of being and the same Spirit looking at itself in the dynamism of its essence and principle. Space and Time are our names for this self-extension of the one Reality. We are apt to see Space as a static extension in which all things stand or move together in a fixed order; we see Time as a mobile extension which is measured by movement and event: Space then would be Brahman in self-extended status; Time would be Brahman in self-extended movement. But this may be only a first view and inaccurate: Space may be really a constant mobile, the constancy and the persistent time-relation of things in it creating the sense of stability of Space, the mobility creating the sense of time-movement in stable Space. Or, again, Space would be Brahman extended for the holding together of forms and objects; Time would be Brahman self-extended for the deployment of the movement of self-power carrying forms and objects; the two would then be a dual aspect of one and the same self-extension of the cosmic Eternal.

A purely physical Space might be regarded as in itself a property of Matter; but Matter is a creation of Energy in movement. Space therefore in the material world could be either a fundamental self-extension of material Energy or its self-formed existence-field, its representation of the Inconscient Infinity in which it is acting, a figure in which it accommodates the formulas and movements of its own action and self-creation. Time would be itself the course of that movement or else an impression created by it, an impression of something that presents itself to us as regularly successive in its appearance, — a division or a continuum upholding the continuity of movement and yet marking off its successions, — because the movement itself is regularly successive. Or else Time could be a dimension of Space necessary for the complete action of the Energy, but not understood by us as such because it is seen by our conscious subjectivity as something itself subjective, felt by our mind,

not perceived by our senses, and therefore not recognised as a dimension of space which has to us the appearance of a sense-created or sense-perceived objective extension.

In any case, if Spirit is the fundamental reality, Time and Space must either be conceptive conditions under which the Spirit sees its own movement of energy or else they must be fundamental conditions of the Spirit itself which assume a different appearance or status according to the status of consciousness in which they manifest. In other words there is a different Time and Space for each status of our consciousness and even different movements of Time and Space within each status; but all would be renderings of a fundamental spiritual reality of Time-Space. In fact, when we go behind physical space, we become aware of an extension on which all this movement is based and this extension is spiritual and not material; it is Self or Spirit containing all action of its own Energy. This origin or basic reality of Space begins to become apparent when we draw back from the physical: for then we become aware of a subjective Space-extension in which mind itself lives and moves and which is other than physical Space-Time, and yet there is an interpenetration; for our mind can move in its own space in such a way as to effectuate a movement also in space of Matter or act upon something distant in space of Matter. In a still deeper condition of consciousness we are aware of a pure spiritual Space; in this awareness Time may no longer seem to exist, because all movement ceases, or, if there is a movement or happening, it can take place independent of any observable Time sequence.

If we go behind Time by a similar inward motion, drawing back from the physical and seeing it without being involved in it, we discover that Time observation and Time movement are relative, but Time itself is real and eternal. Time observation depends not only on the measures used, but on the consciousness and the position of the observer: moreover, each state of consciousness has a different Time relation; Time in Mind-consciousness and Mind Space has not the same sense and measure of its movements as in physical Space; it moves there quickly or slowly according to the state of the consciousness. Each state of consciousness has its own Time and yet there can be relations of

Time between them; and when we go behind the physical surface, we find several different Time statuses and Time movements co-existent in the same consciousness. This is evident in dream Time where a long sequence of happenings can occur in a period which corresponds to a second or a few seconds of physical Time. There is then a certain relation between different Time statuses but no ascertainable correspondence of measure. It would seem as if Time had no objective reality, but depends on whatever conditions may be established by action of consciousness in its relation to status and motion of being: Time would seem to be purely subjective. But, in fact, Space also would appear by the mutual relation of Mind-Space and Matter-Space to be subjective; in other words, both are the original spiritual extension, but it is rendered by mind in its purity into a subjective mind-field and by sense-mind into an objective field of sense-perception. Subjectivity and objectivity are only two sides of one consciousness, and the cardinal fact is that any given Time or Space or any given Time-Space as a whole is a status of being in which there is a movement of the consciousness and force of the being, a movement that creates or manifests events and happenings; it is the relation of the consciousness that sees and the force that formulates the happenings, a relation inherent in the status, which determines the sense of Time and creates our awareness of Time-movement, Time-relation, Time-measure. In its fundamental truth the original status of Time behind all its variations is nothing else than the eternity of the Eternal, just as the fundamental truth of Space, the original sense of its reality, is the infinity of the Infinite.

The Being can have three different states of its consciousness with regard to its own eternity. The first is that in which there is the immobile status of the Self in its essential existence, self-absorbed or self-conscious, but in either case without development of consciousness in movement or happening; this is what we distinguish as its timeless eternity. The second is its whole-consciousness of the successive relations of all things belonging to a destined or an actually proceeding manifestation, in which what we call past, present and future stand together as if in a map or settled design or very much as an artist or painter or archi-

tect might hold all the detail of his work viewed as a whole, intended or reviewed in his mind or arranged in a plan for execution; this is the stable status or simultaneous integrality of Time. This seeing of Time is not at all part of our normal awareness of events as they happen, though our view of the past, because it is already known and can be regarded in the whole, may put on something of this character; but we know that this consciousness exists because it is possible in an exceptional state to enter into it and see things from the viewpoint of this simultaneity of Time-vision. The third status is that of a processive movement of Consciousness-Force and its successive working out of what has been seen by it in the static vision of the Eternal; this is the Time movement. But it is in one and the same Eternity that this triple status exists and the movement takes place; there are not really two eternities, one an eternity of status, another an eternity of movement, but there are different statuses or positions taken by Consciousness with regard to the one Eternity. For it can see the whole Time development from outside or from above the movement; it can take a stable position within the movement and see the before and the after in a fixed, determined or destined succession; or it can take instead a mobile position in the movement, itself move with it from moment to moment and see all that has happened receding back into the past and all that has to happen coming towards it from the future; or else it may concentrate on the moment it occupies and see nothing but what is in that moment and immediately around or behind it. All these positions can be taken by the being of the Infinite in a simultaneous vision or experience. It can see Time from above and inside Time, exceeding it and not within it; it can see the Timeless develop the Time-movement without ceasing to be timeless, it can embrace the whole movement in a static and a dynamic vision and put out at the same time something of itself into the moment-vision. This simultaneity may seem to the finite consciousness tied to the moment-vision a magic of the Infinite, a magic of Maya; to its own way of perception which needs to limit, to envisage one status only at a time in order to harmonise, it would give a sense of confused and inconsistent unreality. But to an infinite consciousness such an

integral simultaneity of vision and experience would be perfectly logical and consistent; all could be elements of a whole-vision capable of being closely related together in a harmonious arrangement, a multiplicity of view bringing out the unity of the thing seen, a diverse presentation of concomitant aspects of the One Reality.

If there can be this simultaneous multiplicity of self-presentation of one Reality, we see that there is no impossibility in the co-existence of a Timeless Eternal and a Time Eternity. It would be the same Eternity viewed by a dual self-awareness and there could be no opposition between them; it would be a correlation of two powers of the self-awareness of the infinite and eternal Reality, — a power of status and non-manifestation, a power of self-effecting action and movement and manifestation. Their simultaneity, however contradictory and difficult to reconcile it might seem to our finite surface seeing, would be intrinsic and normal to the Maya or eternal self-knowledge and all-knowledge of Brahman, the eternal and infinite knowledge and wisdom-power of the Ishwara, the consciousness-force of the self-existent Sachchidananda.

CHAPTER III

The Eternal and the Individual

> He am I.
>
> *Isha Upanishad.*[1]

> It is an eternal portion of Me that has become the living being in a world of living beings.... The eye of knowledge sees the Lord abiding in the body and enjoying and going forth from it.
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> *Gita.*[2]

> Two birds beautiful of wing, friends and comrades, cling to a common tree, and one eats the sweet fruit, the other regards him and eats not.... Where winged souls cry the discoveries of knowledge over their portion of immortality, there the Lord of all, the Guardian of the World took possession of me, he the Wise, me the ignorant.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[3]

THERE is then a fundamental truth of existence, an Omnipresent Reality, omnipresent above the cosmic manifestation and in it and immanent in each individual. There is also a dynamic power of this Omnipresence, a creative or self-manifesting action of its infinite Consciousness-Force. There is as a phase or movement of the self-manifestation a descent into an apparent material inconscience, an awakening of the individual out of the Inconscience and an evolution of his being into the spiritual and supramental consciousness and power of the Reality, into his own universal and transcendent Self and source of existence. It is on this foundation that we have to base our conception of a truth in our terrestrial being and the possibility of a divine Life in material Nature. There our chief need is to discover the origin and nature of the Ignorance which we see emerging out of the inconscience of matter or disclosing itself within a body of matter and the nature of the Knowledge that has to replace it, to understand too the process of Nature's self-unfolding and the soul's recovery. For in fact the Knowledge is there concealed in the Ignorance itself; it has rather to be unveiled than acquired: it reveals itself rather than is learned, by

[1] Verse 16. [2] XV. 7, 10. [3] I. 164. 20, 21.

an inward and upward self-unfolding. But first it will be convenient to meet and get out of the way one difficulty that inevitably arises, the difficulty of admitting that, even given the immanence of the Divine in us, even given our individual consciousness as a vehicle of progressive evolutionary manifestation, the individual is in any sense eternal or that there can be any persistence of individuality after liberation has been attained by unity and self-knowledge.

This is a difficulty of the logical reason and must be met by a larger and more catholic enlightening reason. Or if it is a difficulty of spiritual experience, it can only be met by a wider resolving experience. It can indeed be met also by a dialectical battle, a logomachy of the logical mind; but that by itself is an artificial method, often a futile combat in the clouds and always inconclusive. Logical reasoning is useful and indispensable in its own field in order to give the mind a certain clearness, precision and subtlety in dealing with its own ideas and word-symbols, so that our perception of the truths which we arrive at by observation and experience or which physically, psychologically or spiritually we have seen, may be as little as possible obscured by the confusions of our average human intelligence, its proneness to take appearance for fact, its haste to be misled by partial truth, its exaggerated conclusions, its intellectual and emotional partialities, its incompetent bunglings in that linking of truth to truth by which alone we can arrive at a complete knowledge. We must have a clear, pure, subtle and flexible mind in order that we may fall as little as possible into that ordinary mental habit of our kind which turns truth itself into a purveyor of errors. That clarification, the habit of clear logical reasoning culminating in the method of metaphysical dialectics, does help to accomplish and its part in the preparation of knowledge is therefore very great. But by itself it cannot arrive either at the knowledge of the world or the knowledge of God, much less reconcile the lower and the higher realisation. It is much more efficiently a guardian against error than a discoverer of truth, — although by deduction from knowledge already acquired it may happen upon new truths and indicate them for experience or for the higher and larger truth-seeing faculties to confirm.

In the more subtle field of synthetical or unifying knowledge the logical habit of mind may even become a stumbling-block by the very faculty which gives it its peculiar use; for it is so accustomed to making distinctions and dwelling upon distinctions and working by distinctions that it is always a little at sea when distinctions have to be overriden and overpassed. Our object, then, in considering the difficulties of the normal mind when face to face with the experience of cosmic and transcendental unity by the individual, must be solely to make more clear to ourselves, first, the origin of the difficulties and the escape from them and by that, what is more important, the real nature of the unity at which we arrive and of the culmination of the individual when he becomes one with all creatures and dwells in the oneness of the Eternal.

The first difficulty for the reason is that it has always been accustomed to identify the individual self with the ego and to think of it as existing only by the limitations and exclusions of the ego. If that were so, then by the transcendence of the ego the individual would abolish his own existence; our end would be to disappear and dissolve into some universality of matter, life, mind or spirit or else some indeterminate from which our egoistic determinations of individuality have started. But what is this strongly separative self-experience that we call ego? It is nothing fundamentally real in itself but only a practical constitution of our consciousness devised to centralise the activities of Nature in us. We perceive a formation of mental, physical, vital experience which distinguishes itself from the rest of being, and that is what we think of as ourselves in nature — this individualisation of being in becoming. We then proceed to conceive of ourselves as something which has thus individualised itself and only exists so long as it is individualised, — a temporary or at least a temporal becoming; or else we conceive of ourselves as someone who supports or causes the individualisation, an immortal being perhaps but limited by its individuality. This perception and this conception constitute our ego-sense. Normally, we go no farther in our knowledge of our individual existence.

But in the end we have to see that our individualisation is only a superficial formation, a practical selection and limited

conscious synthesis for the temporary utility of life in a particular body, or else it is a constantly changing and developing synthesis pursued through successive lives in successive bodies. Behind it there is a consciousness, a Purusha, who is not determined or limited by his individualisation or by this synthesis but on the contrary determines, supports and yet exceeds it. That which he selects from in order to construct this synthesis, is his total experience of the world-being. Therefore our individualisation exists by virtue of the world-being, but also by virtue of a consciousness which uses the world-being for experience of its possibilities of individuality. These two powers, Person and his world-material, are both necessary for our present experience of individuality. If the Purusha with his individualising syntheses of consciousness were to disappear, to merge, to annul himself in any way, our constructed individuality would cease because the Reality that supported it would no longer be in presence; if, on the other hand, the world-being were to dissolve, merge, disappear, then also our individualisation would cease, for the material of experience by which it effectuates itself would be wanting. We have then to recognise these two terms of our existence, a world-being and an individualising consciousness which is the cause of all our self-experience and world-experience.

But we see farther that in the end this Purusha, this cause and self of our individuality, comes to embrace the whole world and all other beings in a sort of conscious extension of itself and to perceive itself as one with the world-being. In its conscious extension of itself it exceeds the primary experience and abolishes the barriers of its active self-limitation and individualisation; by its perception of its own infinite universality it goes beyond all consciousness of separative individuality or limited soul-being. By that very fact the individual ceases to be the self-limiting ego; in other words, our false consciousness of existing only by self-limitation, by rigid distinction of ourselves from the rest of being and becoming is transcended; our identification of ourselves with our personal and temporal individualisation in a particular mind and body is abolished. But is all truth of individuality and individualisation abolished? does the Purusha

cease to exist or does he become the world-Purusha and live intimately in innumerable minds and bodies? We do not find it to be so. He still individualises and it is still he who exists and embraces this wider consciousness while he individualises: but the mind no longer thinks of a limited temporary individualisation as all ourselves but only as a wave of becoming thrown up from the sea of its being or else as a form or centre of universality. The soul still makes the world-becoming the material for individual experience, but instead of regarding it as something outside and larger than itself on which it has to draw, by which it is affected, with which it has to make accommodations, it is aware of it subjectively as within itself; it embraces both its world-material and its individualised experience of spatial and temporal activities in a free and enlarged consciousness. In this new consciousness the spiritual individual perceives its true self to be one in being with the Transcendence and seated and dwelling within it, and no longer takes its constructed individuality as anything more than a formation for world-experience.

Our unity with the world-being is the consciousness of a Self which at one and the same time cosmicises in the world and individualises through the individual Purusha, and both in that world-being and in this individual being and in all individual beings it is aware of the same Self manifesting and experiencing its various manifestations. That then is a Self which must be one in its being, — otherwise we could not have this experience of unity, — and yet must be capable in its very unity of cosmic differentiation and multiple individuality. The unity is its being, — yes, but the cosmic differentiation and the multiple individuality are the power of its being which it is constantly displaying and which it is its delight and the nature of its consciousness to display. If then we arrive at unity with that, if we even become entirely and in every way that being, why should the power of its being be excised and why at all should we desire or labour to excise it? We should then only diminish the scope of our unity with it by an exclusive concentration accepting the divine being but not accepting our part in the power and consciousness and infinite delight of the Divine. It would in fact be the individual seeking peace and rest of union in a motionless identity, but

rejecting delight and various joy of union in the nature and act and power of the divine Existence. That is possible, but there is no necessity to uphold it as the ultimate aim of our being or as our ultimate perfection.

Or the one possible reason would be that in the power, the act of consciousness there is not real union and that only in the status of consciousness is there perfect undifferentiated unity. Now in what we may call the waking union of the individual with the Divine, as opposed to a falling asleep or a concentration of the individual consciousness in an absorbed identity, there is certainly and must be a differentiation of experience. For in this active unity the individual Purusha enlarges its active experience also as well as its static consciousness into a way of union with this Self of his being and of the world-being, and yet individualisation remains and therefore differentiation. The Purusha is aware of all other individuals as selves of himself; he may by a dynamic union become aware of their mental and practical action as occurring in his universal consciousness, just as he is aware of his own mental and practical action; he may help to determine their action by subjective union with them: but still there is a practical difference. The action of the Divine in himself is that with which he is particularly and directly concerned; the action of the Divine in his other selves is that with which he is universally concerned, not directly, but through and by his union with them and with the Divine. The individual therefore exists though he exceeds the little separative ego; the universal exists and is embraced by him but it does not absorb and abolish all individual differentiation, even though by his universalising himself the limitation which we call the ego is overcome.

Now we may get rid of this differentiation by plunging into the absorption of an exclusive unity, but to what end? For perfect union? But we do not forfeit that by accepting the differentiation any more than the Divine forfeits His oneness by accepting it. We have the perfect union in His being and can absorb ourselves in it at any time, but we have also this other differentiated unity and can emerge into it and act freely in it at any time without losing oneness: for we have merged the ego and are absolved from the exclusive stresses of our mentality.

Then for peace and rest? But we have the peace and rest by virtue of our unity with Him, even as the Divine possesses for ever His eternal calm in the midst of His eternal action. Then for the mere joy of getting rid of all differentiation? But that differentiation has its divine purpose: it is a means of greater unity, not as in the egoistic life a means of divisions; for we enjoy by it our unity with our other selves and with God in all, which we exclude by our rejection of his multiple being. In either experience it is the Divine in the individual possessing and enjoying in one case the Divine in His pure unity or in the other the Divine in that and in the unity of the cosmos; it is not the absolute Divine recovering after having lost His unity. Certainly, we may prefer the absorption in a pure exclusive unity or a departure into a supracosmic transcendence, but there is in the spiritual truth of the Divine Existence no compelling reason why we should not participate in this large possession and bliss of His universal being which is the fulfilment of our individuality.

But we see farther that it is not solely and ultimately the cosmic being into which our individual being enters but something in which both are unified. As our individualisation in the world is a becoming of that Self, so is the world too a becoming of that Self. The world-being includes always the individual being; therefore these two becomings, the cosmic and the individual, are always related to each other and in their practical relation mutually dependent. But we find that the individual being also comes in the end to include the world in its consciousness, and since this is not by an abolition of the spiritual individual, but by his coming to his full, large and perfect self-consciousness, we must suppose that the individual always included the cosmos, and it is only the surface consciousness which by ignorance failed to possess that inclusion because of its self-limitation in ego. But when we speak of the mutual inclusion of the cosmic and the individual, the world in me, I in the world, all in me, I in all, — for that is the liberated self-experience, — we are evidently travelling beyond the language of the normal reason. That is because the words we have to use were minted by mind and given their values by an intellect bound to the conceptions of physical Space and circumstance

and using for the language of a higher psychological experience figures drawn from the physical life and the experience of the senses. But the plane of consciousness to which the liberated human being arises is not dependent upon the physical world, and the cosmos which we thus include and are included in is not the physical cosmos, but the harmonically manifest being of God in certain great rhythms of His conscious-force and self-delight. Therefore this mutual inclusion is spiritual and psychological; it is a translation of the two forms of the Many, all and individual, into a unifying spiritual experience, — a translation of the eternal unity of the One and the Many; for the One is the eternal unity of the Many differentiating and undifferentiating itself in the cosmos. This means that cosmos and individual are manifestations of a transcendent Self who is indivisible being although he seems to be divided or distributed; but he is not really divided or distributed but indivisibly present everywhere. Therefore all is in each and each is in all and all is in God and God in all; and when the liberated soul comes into union with this Transcendent, it has this self-experience of itself and cosmos which is translated psychologically into a mutual inclusion and a persistent existence of both in a divine union which is at once a oneness and a fusion and an embrace.

The normal experience of the reason therefore is not applicable to these higher truths. In the first place the ego is the individual only in the ignorance; there is a true individual who is not the ego and still has an eternal relation with all other individuals which is not egoistic or self-separative, but of which the essential character is practical mutuality founded in essential unity. This mutuality founded in unity is the whole secret of the divine existence in its perfect manifestation; it must be the basis of anything to which we can give the name of a divine life. But, secondly, we see that the whole difficulty and confusion into which the normal reason falls is that we are speaking of a higher and illimitable self-experience founded on divine infinites and yet are applying to it a language formed by this lower and limited experience which founds itself on finite appearances and the separative definitions by which we try to distinguish and classify the phenomena of the material universe. Thus we have to use the word

individual and speak of the ego and the true individual, just as we speak sometimes of the apparent and the real Man. Evidently, all these words, man, apparent, real, individual, true, have to be taken in a very relative sense and with a full awareness of their imperfection and inability to express the things that we mean. By individual we mean normally something that separates itself from everything else and stands apart, though in reality there is no such thing anywhere in existence; it is a figment of our mental conceptions useful and necessary to express a partial and practical truth. But the difficulty is that the mind gets dominated by its words and forgets that the partial and practical truth becomes true truth only by its relation to others which seem to the reason to contradict it, and that taken by itself it contains a constant element of falsity. Thus when we speak of an individual we mean ordinarily an individualisation of mental, vital, physical being separate from all other beings, incapable of unity with them by its very individuality. If we go beyond these three terms of mind, life and body, and speak of the soul or individual self, we still think of an individualised being separate from all others, incapable of unity and inclusive mutuality, capable at most of a spiritual contact and soul-sympathy. It is therefore necessary to insist that by the true individual we mean nothing of the kind, but a conscious power of being of the Eternal, always existing by unity, always capable of mutuality. It is that being which by self-knowledge enjoys liberation and immortality.

But we have to carry still farther the conflict between the normal and the higher reason. When we speak of the true individual as a conscious power of being of the Eternal, we are still using intellectual terms, — we cannot help it, unless we plunge into a language of pure symbols and mystic values of speech, — but, what is worse, we are, in the attempt to get away from the idea of the ego, using a too abstract language. Let us say, then, a conscious being who is for our valuations of existence a being of the Eternal in his power of individualising self-experience; for it must be a concrete being, — and not an abstract power, — who enjoys immortality. And then we get to this that not only am I in the world and the world in me, but God is in me and I am in God; by which yet it is not meant that God depends for

His existence on man, but that He manifests Himself in that which He manifests within Himself; the individual exists in the Transcendent, but all the Transcendent is there concealed in the individual. Further I am one with God in my being and yet I can have relations with Him in my experience. I, the liberated individual, can enjoy the Divine in His transcendence, unified with Him, and enjoy at the same time the Divine in other individuals and in His cosmic being. Evidently we have arrived at certain primary relations of the Absolute and they can only be intelligible to the mind if we see that the Transcendent, the individual, the cosmic being are the eternal powers of consciousness, — we fall again, this time without remedy, into a wholly abstract language, — of an absolute existence, a unity yet more than a unity, which so expresses itself to its own consciousness in us, but which we cannot adequately speak of in human language and must not hope to describe either by negative or positive terms to our reason, but can only hope to indicate it to the utmost power of our language.

But the normal mind, which has no experience of these things that are so powerfully real to the liberated consciousness, may well revolt against what may seem to it nothing more than a mass of intellectual contradictions. It may say, "I know very well what the Absolute is; it is that in which there are no relations. The Absolute and the relative are irreconcilable opposites; in the relative there is nowhere anything absolute, in the Absolute there can be nothing relative. Anything which contradicts these first data of my thought, is intellectually false and practically impossible. These other statements also contradict my law of contradictions which is that two opposing and conflicting affirmations cannot both be true. It is impossible that there should be oneness with God and yet a relation with Him such as this of the enjoyment of the Divine. In oneness there is no one to enjoy except the One and nothing to be enjoyed except the One. God, the individual and the cosmos must be three different actualities, otherwise there could be no relations between them. Either they are eternally different or they are different in present time, although they may have originally been one undifferentiated existence and may eventually re-become one undifferentiated exis-

tence. Unity was perhaps and will be perhaps, but it is not now and cannot be so long as cosmos and the individual endure. The cosmic being can only know and possess the transcendent unity by ceasing to be cosmic; the individual can only know and possess the cosmic or the transcendent unity by ceasing from all individuality and individualisation. Or if unity is the one eternal fact, then cosmos and individual are non-existent; they are illusions imposed on itself by the Eternal. That may well involve a contradiction or an unreconciled paradox; but I am willing to admit a contradiction in the Eternal which I am not compelled to think out, rather than a contradiction here of my primary conceptions which I am compelled to think out logically and to practical ends. I am on this supposition able either to take the world as practically real and think and act in it or to reject it as an unreality and cease to think and act; I am not compelled to reconcile contradictions, not called on to be conscious of and conscious in something beyond myself and world and yet deal from that basis, as God does, with a world of contradictions. The attempt to be as God while I am still an individual or to be three things at a time seems to me to involve a logical confusion and a practical impossibility." Such might well be the attitude of the normal reason, and it is clear, lucid, positive in its distinctions; it involves no extraordinary gymnastics of the reason trying to exceed itself and losing itself in shadows and half-lights or any kind of mysticism, or at least there is only one original and comparatively simple mysticism free from all other difficult complexities. Therefore it is the reasoning which is the most satisfactory to the simply rational mind. Yet is there here a triple error, the error of making an unbridgeable gulf between the Absolute and the relative, the error of making too simple and rigid and extending too far the law of contradictions and the error of conceiving in terms of Time the genesis of things which have their origin and first habitat in the Eternal.

We mean by the Absolute something greater than ourselves, greater than the cosmos which we live in, the supreme reality of that transcendent Being which we call God, something without which all that we see or are conscious of as existing, could not have been, could not for a moment remain in existence. Indian

thought calls it Brahman, European thought the Absolute because it is a self-existent which is absolved of all bondage to relativities. For all relatives can only exist by something which is the truth of them all and the source and continent of their powers and properties and yet exceeds them all; it is something of which not only each relativity itself, but also any sum we can make of all relatives that we know, can only be, — in all that we know of them, — a partial, inferior or practical expression. We see by reason that such an Absolute must exist; we become by spiritual experience aware of its existence: but even when we are most aware of it, we cannot describe it because our language and thought can deal only with the relative. The Absolute is for us the Ineffable.

So far there need be no real difficulty nor confusion. But we readily go on, led by the mind's habit of oppositions, of thinking by distinctions and pairs of contraries, to speak of it as not only not bound by the limitations of the relative, but as if it were bound by its freedom from limitations, inexorably empty of all power for relations and in its nature incapable of them, something hostile in its whole being to relativity and its eternal contrary. By this false step of our logic we get into an impasse. Our own existence and the existence of the universe become not only a mystery, but logically inconceivable. For we get by that to an Absolute which is incapable of relativity and exclusive of all relatives and yet the cause or at least the support of relativity and the container, truth and substance of all relatives. We have then only one logical-illogical way of escape out of the impasse; we have to suppose the imposition of the world as a self-effective illusion or an unreal temporal reality, on the eternity of the formless relationless Absolute. This imposition is made by our misleading individual consciousness which falsely sees Brahman in the figure of the cosmos, — as a man mistakes a rope for a serpent; but since either our individual consciousness is itself a relative supported by the Brahman and only existent by it, not a real reality, or since in its reality it is itself the Brahman, it is the Brahman after all which imposes on itself in us this delusion and mistakes in some figure of its own consciousness an existent rope for a non-existent snake, imposes on its own indeterminable pure

Reality the semblance of a universe, or if it does not impose it on its own consciousness, it is on a consciousness derived from it and dependent on it, a projection of itself into Maya. By this explanation nothing is explained; the original contradiction stands where it was, unreconciled, and we have only stated it over again in other terms. It looks as if, by attempting to arrive at an explanation by means of intellectual reasoning, we have only befogged ourselves by the delusion of our own uncompromising logic: we have imposed on the Absolute the imposition which our too presumptuous reasoning has practised on our own intelligence; we have transformed our mental difficulty in understanding the world-manifestation into an original impossibility for the Absolute to manifest itself in world at all. But the Absolute, obviously, finds no difficulty in world-manifestation and no difficulty either in a simultaneous transcendence of world-manifestation; *the difficulty exists only for our mental limitations* which prevent us from grasping the supramental rationality of the co-existence of the infinite and the finite or seizing the nodus of the unconditioned with the conditioned. For our intellectual rationality these are opposites; for the absolute reason they are interrelated and not essentially conflicting expressions of one and the same reality. The consciousness of infinite Existence is other than our mind-consciousness and sense-consciousness, greater and more capacious, for it includes them as minor terms of its workings, and the logic of infinite Existence is other than our intellectual logic. It reconciles in its great primal facts of being what to our mental view, concerned as it is with words and ideas derived from secondary facts, are irreconcilable contraries.

Our mistake is that in trying to define the indefinable we think we have succeeded when we have described by an all-exclusive negation this Absolute which we are yet compelled to conceive of as a supreme positive and the cause of all positives. It is not surprising that so many acute thinkers, with their eye on the facts of being and not on verbal distinctions, should be driven to infer that the Absolute is a fiction of the intelligence, an idea born of words and verbal dialectics, a zero, non-existent, and to conclude that an eternal Becoming is the only truth of our

existence. The ancient sages spoke indeed of Brahman negatively, — they said of it, *neti neti*, it is not this, it is not that, — but they took care also to speak of it positively; they said of it too, it is this, it is that, it is all: for they saw that to limit it either by positive or negative definitions was to fall away from its truth. Brahman, they said, is Matter, is Life, is Mind, is Supermind, is cosmic Delight, is Sachchidananda; yet it cannot really be defined by any of these things, not even by our largest conception of Sachchidananda. In the world as we see it, for our mental consciousness however high we carry it, we find that to every positive there is a negative. But the negative is not a zero, — indeed whatever appears to us a zero is packed with force, teeming with power of existence, full of actual or potential contents. Neither does the existence of the negative make its corresponding positive non-existent or an unreality; it only makes the positive an incomplete statement of the truth of things and even, we may say, of the positive's own truth. For the positive and the negative exist not only side by side, but in relation to each other and by each other; they complete and would to the all-view, which a limited mind cannot reach, explain one another. Each by itself is not really known; we only begin to know it in its deeper truth when we can read into it the suggestions of its apparent opposite. It is through such a profounder catholic intuition and not by exclusive logical oppositions that our intelligence ought to approach the Absolute.

The positives of the Absolute are its various statements of itself to our consciousness; its negatives bring in the rest of its absolute positivity by which its limitation to these first statements is denied. We have, to begin with, its large primary relations such as the infinite and the finite, the conditioned and unconditioned, the qualitied and unqualitied; in each pair the negative conceals the whole power of the corresponding positive which is contained in it and emerges from it: there is no real opposition. We have, in a less subtle order of truths, the transcendent and the cosmic, the universal and the individual; here we have seen that each member of these pairs is contained in its apparent opposite. The universal particularises itself in the individual; the individual contains in himself all the generalities of the universal. The uni-

versal consciousness finds all itself by the variations of numberless individuals, not by suppressing variations; the individual consciousness fulfils all itself when it is universalised into sympathy and identity with the cosmic, not by limiting itself in the ego. So too the cosmic contains in all itself and in each thing in it the complete immanence of the transcendent; it maintains itself as the world-being by the consciousness of its own transcendent reality, it finds itself in each individual being by the realisation of the divine and transcendent in that being and in all existences. The transcendent contains, manifests, constitutes the cosmos and by manifesting it manifests or discovers, as we may say in the old poetic sense of that word, its own infinite harmonic varieties. But even in the lower orders of the relative we find this play of negative and positive, and through the divine reconciliation of its terms, not by excising them or carrying their opposition to the bitter end, we have to arrive at the Absolute. For there in the Absolute all this relativity, all this varying rhythmic self-statement of the Absolute, finds, not its complete denial, but its reason for existence and its justification, not its conviction as a lie, but the source and principle of its truth. Cosmos and individual go back to something in the Absolute which is the true truth of individuality, the true truth of cosmic being and not their denial and conviction of their falsity. The Absolute is not a sceptical logician denying the truth of all his own statements and self-expressions, but an existence so utterly and so infinitely positive that no finite positive can be formulated which can exhaust it or bind it down to its definitions.

It is evident that if such is the truth of the Absolute, we cannot bind it either by our law of contradictions. That law is necessary to us in order that we may posit partial and practical truths, think out things clearly, decisively and usefully, classify, act, deal with them effectively for particular purposes in our divisions of Space, distinctions of form and property, moments of Time. It represents a formal and strongly dynamic truth of existence in its practical workings which is strongest in the most outward term of things, the material, but becomes less and less rigidly binding as we go upward in the scale, mount on the more subtle rungs of the ladder of being. It is especially necessary for us in

dealing with material phenomena and forces; we have to suppose them to be one thing at a time, to have one power at a time and to be limited by their ostensible and practically effective capacities and properties; otherwise we cannot deal with them. But even there, as human thought is beginning to realise, the distinctions made by the intellect and the classifications and practical experiments of Science, while perfectly valid in their own field and for their own purpose, do not represent the whole or the real truth of things, whether of things in the whole or of the thing by itself which we have classified and set artificially apart, isolated for separate analysis. By that isolation we are indeed able to deal with it very practically, very effectively, and we think at first that the effectiveness of our action proves the entire and sufficient truth of our isolating and analysing knowledge. Afterwards we find that by getting beyond it we can arrive at a greater truth and a greater effectivity.

The isolation is certainly necessary for first knowledge. A diamond is a diamond and a pearl a pearl, each thing of its own class, existing by its distinction from all others, each distinguished by its own form and properties. But each has also properties and elements which are common to both and others which are common to material things in general. And in reality each does not exist only by its distinctions, but much more essentially by that which is common to both; and we get back to the very basis and enduring truth of all material things only when we find that all are the same thing, one energy, one substance or, if you like, one universal motion which throws up, brings out, combines, realises these different forms, these various properties, these fixed and harmonised potentialities of its own being. If we stop short at the knowledge of distinctions, we can deal only with diamond and pearl as they are, fix their values, uses, varieties, make the best ordinary use and profit of them; but if we can get to the knowledge and control of their elements and the common properties of the class to which they belong, we may arrive at the power of making either a diamond or pearl at our pleasure: go farther still and master that which all material things are in their essence and we may arrive even at the power of transmutation which would give the greatest possible control

of material Nature. Thus the knowledge of distinctions arrives at its greatest truth and effective use when we arrive at the deeper knowledge of that which reconciles distinctions in the unity behind all variations. That deeper knowledge does not deprive the other and more superficial of effectivity nor convict it of vanity. We cannot conclude from our ultimate material discovery that there is no original substance or Matter, only energy manifesting substance or manifesting as substance, — that diamond and pearl are non-existent, unreal, only true to the illusion of our senses of perception and action, that the one substance, energy or motion is the sole eternal truth and that therefore the best or only rational use of our science would be to dissolve diamond and pearl and everything else that we can dissolve into this one eternal and original reality and get done with their forms and properties for ever. There is an essentiality of things, a commonalty of things, an individuality of things; the commonalty and individuality are true and eternal powers of the essentiality: that transcends them both, but the three together and not one by itself are the eternal terms of existence.

This truth which we can see, though with difficulty and under considerable restrictions, even in the material world where the subtler and higher powers of being have to be excluded from our intellectual operations, becomes clearer and more powerful when we ascend in the scale. We see the truth of our classifications and distinctions, but also their limits. All things, even while different, are yet one. For practical purposes plant, animal, man are different existences; yet when we look deeper we see that the plant is only an animal with an insufficient evolution of self-consciousness and dynamic force; the animal is man in the making; man himself is that animal and yet the something more of self-consciousness and dynamic power of consciousness that make him man; and yet again he is the something more which is contained and repressed in his being as the potentiality of the divine, — he is a god in the making. In each of these, plant, animal, man, god, the Eternal is there containing and repressing himself as it were in order to make a certain statement of his being. Each is the whole Eternal concealed. Man himself, who takes up all that went before him and transmutes it into the

term of manhood, is the individual human being and yet he is all mankind, the universal man acting in the individual as a human personality. He is all and yet he is himself and unique. He is what he is, but he is also the past of all that he was and the potentiality of all that he is not. We cannot understand him if we look only at his present individuality, but we cannot understand him either if we look only at his commonalty, his general term of manhood, or go back by exclusion from both to an essentiality of his being in which his distinguishing manhood and his particularising individuality seem to disappear. Each thing is the Absolute, all are that One, but in these three terms always the Absolute makes its statement of its developed self-existence. We are not, because of the essential unity, compelled to say that all God's various action and workings are vain, worthless, unreal, phenomenal, illusory, and that the best and only rational or super-rational use we can make of our knowledge is to get away from them, dissolve our cosmic and individual existence into the essential being and get rid of all becoming as a futility for ever.

In our practical dealings with life we have to arrive at the same truth. For certain practical ends we have to say that a thing is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, just or unjust and act upon that statement; but if we limit ourselves by it, we do not get at real knowledge. The law of contradictions here is only valid in so far as two different and opposite statements cannot be true of the same thing at the same time, in the same field, in the same respect, from the same point of view and for the same practical purpose. A great war, destruction or violent all-upheaving revolution, for example, may present itself to us as an evil, a virulent and catastrophic disorder, and it is so in certain respects, results, ways of looking at it; but from others, it may be a great good, since it rapidly clears the field for a new good or a more satisfying order. No man is simply good or simply bad; every man is a mixture of contraries: even we find these contraries often inextricably mixed up in a single feeling, a single action. All kinds of conflicting qualities, powers, values meet together and run into each other to make up our action, life, nature. We can only understand entirely if we get to some sense of the Absolute and yet look at its workings in all the relativities which are being

manifested, — look not only at each by itself, but each in relation to all and to that which exceeds and reconciles them all. In fact we can only know by getting to the divine view and purpose in things and not merely looking at our own, though our own limited human view and momentary purpose have their validity in the cadre of the All. For behind all relativities there is this Absolute which gives them their being and their justification. No particular act or arrangement in the world is by itself absolute justice; but there is behind all acts and arrangements something absolute which we call justice, which expresses itself through their relativities and which we would realise if our view and knowledge were comprehensive instead of being as they are partial, superficial, limited to a few ostensible facts and appearances. So too there is an absolute good and an absolute beauty: but we can only get a glimpse of it if we embrace all things impartially and get beyond their appearances to some sense of that which, between them, all and each are by their complex terms trying to state and work out; not an indeterminate, — for the indeterminate, being only the original stuff or perhaps the packed condition of determinations, would explain by itself nothing at all, — but the Absolute. We can indeed follow the opposite method of breaking up all things and refusing to look at them as a whole and in relation to that which justifies them and so create an intellectual conception of absolute evil, absolute injustice, the absolute hideousness, painfulness, triviality, vulgarity or vanity of all things; but that is to pursue to its extreme the method of the Ignorance whose view is based upon division. We cannot rightly so deal with the divine workings. Because the Absolute expresses itself through relativities the secret of which we find it difficult to fathom, because to our limited view everything appears to be a purposeless play of oppositions and negatives or a mass of contradictions, we cannot conclude that our first limited view is right or that all is a vain delusion of the mind and has no reality. Nor can we solve all by an original unreconciled contradiction which is to explain all the rest. The human reason is wrong in attaching a separate and definitive value to each contradiction by itself or getting rid of one by altogether denying the other; but it is right in refusing to accept as final

and as the last word the coupling of contradictions which have in no way been reconciled together or else found their source and significance in something beyond their opposition.

We cannot, either, effect a reconciliation or explanation of the original contradictions of existence by taking refuge in our concept of Time. Time, as we know or conceive it, is only our means of realising things in succession, it is a condition and cause of conditions, varies on different planes of existence, varies even for beings on one and the same plane: that is to say, it is not an Absolute and cannot explain the primary relations of the Absolute. They work themselves out in detail by Time and seem to our mental and vital being to be determined by it; but that seeming does not carry us back to their sources and principles. We make the distinction of conditioned and unconditioned and we imagine that the unconditioned became conditioned, the Infinite became finite at some date in Time, and may cease to be finite at some other date in Time, because it so appears to us in details, particulars or with regard to this or that system of things. But if we look at existence as a whole, we see that infinite and finite co-exist and exist in and by each other. Even if our universe were to disappear and reappear rhythmically in Time, as was the old belief, that too would be only a large detail and would not show that at a particular time all condition ceases in the whole range of infinite existence and all Being becomes the unconditioned, at another it again takes on the reality or the appearance of conditions. The first source and the primary relations lie beyond our mental divisions of Time, in the divine timelessness or else in the indivisible or eternal Time of which our divisions and successions are only figures in a mental experience.

There we see that all meets and all principles, all persistent realities of existence, — for the finite as a principle of being is as persistent as the infinite, — stand in a primary relation to each other in a free, not an exclusive unity of the Absolute, and that the way they present themselves to us in a material or a mental world is only a working out of them in secondary, tertiary or yet lower relativities. The Absolute has not become the contrary of itself and assumed at a certain date real or unreal relativities

of which it was originally incapable, nor has the One become by a miracle the Many, nor the unconditioned deviated into the conditioned, nor the unqualitied sprouted out into qualities. These oppositions are only the conveniences of our mental consciousness, our divisions of the indivisible. The things they represent are not fictions, they are realities, but they are not rightly known if they are set in irreconcilable opposition to or separation from each other; for there is no such irreconcilable opposition or separation of them in the all-view of the Absolute. This is the weakness not only of our scientific divisions and metaphysical distinctions, but of our exclusive spiritual realisations which are only exclusive because to arrive at them we have to start from our limiting and dividing mental consciousness. We have to make the metaphysical distinctions in order to help our intelligence towards a truth which exceeds it, because it is only so that it can escape from the confusions of our first undistinguishing mental view of things; but if we bind ourselves by them to the end, we make chains of what should only have been first helps. We have to make use too of distinct spiritual realisations which may at first seem contrary to each other, because as mental beings it is difficult or impossible for us to seize at once largely and completely what is beyond our mentality; but we err if we intellectualise them into sole truths, — as when we assert that the Impersonal must be the one ultimate realisation and the rest creation of Maya or declare the Saguna, the Divine in its qualities, to be that and thrust away the impersonality from our spiritual experience. We have to see that both these realisations of the great spiritual seekers are equally valid in themselves, equally invalid against each other; they are one and the same Reality experienced on two sides which are both necessary for the full knowledge and experience of each other and of that which they both are. So is it with the One and the Many, the finite and the infinite, the transcendent and the cosmic, the individual and the universal; each is the other as well as itself and neither can be entirely known without the other and without exceeding their appearance of contrary oppositions.

We see then that there are three terms of the one existence, transcendent, universal and individual, and that each of these

always contains secretly or overtly the two others. The Transcendent possesses itself always and controls the other two as the basis of its own temporal possibilities; that is the Divine, the eternal all-possessing God-consciousness, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, which informs, embraces, governs all existences. The human being is here on earth the highest power of the third term, the individual, for he alone can work out at its critical turning-point that movement of self-manifestation which appears to us as the involution and evolution of the divine consciousness between the two terms of the Ignorance and the Knowledge. The power of the individual to possess in his consciousness by self-knowledge his unity with the Transcendent and the universal, with the One Being and all beings and to live in that knowledge and transform his life by it, is that which makes the working out of the divine self-manifestation through the individual possible; and the arrival of the individual, — not in one but in all, — at the divine life is the sole conceivable object of the movement. The existence of the individual is not an error in some self of the Absolute which that self afterwards discovers; for it is impossible that the absolute self-awareness or anything that is one with it should be ignorant of its own truth and its own capacities and betrayed by that ignorance either into a false idea of itself which it has to correct or an impossible venture which it has to renounce. Neither is the individual existence a subordinate circumstance in a divine play or Lila, a play which consists in a continual revolution through unending cycles of pleasure and suffering without any higher hope in the Lila itself or any issue from it except the occasional escape of a few from time to time out of their bondage to this ignorance. We might be compelled to hold that ruthless and disastrous view of God's workings if man had no power of self-transcendence or no power of transforming by self-knowledge the conditions of the play nearer and nearer to the truth of the divine Delight. In that power lies the justification of individual existence; the individual and the universal unfolding in themselves the divine light, power, joy of transcendent Sachchidananda always manifest above them, always secret behind their surface appearances, this is the secret intention, the ultimate significance of the divine play, the Lila.

But it is in themselves, in their transformation but also their persistence and perfect relations, not in their self-annihilation that that must be unfolded. Otherwise there would be no reason for their ever having existed; the possibility of the Divine's unfolding in the individual is the secret of the enigma, his presence there and this intention of self-unfolding the key to the world of Knowledge-Ignorance.

CHAPTER IV

The Divine and the Undivine

> The Seer, the Thinker, the Self-existent who becomes everywhere has ordered perfectly all things from years sempiternal.
>
> *Isha Upanishad.*[1]

> Many purified by knowledge have come to My state of being.... They have reached likeness in their law of being to Me.
>
> *Gita.*[2]

> Know That for the Brahman and not this which men cherish here.
>
> *Kena Upanishad.*[3]

> One controlling inner Self of all beings.... As the Sun, the eye of the world, is not touched by the external faults of vision, so this inner Self in beings is not touched by the sorrow of the world.
>
> *Katha Upanishad.*[4]

> The Lord abides in the heart of all beings.
>
> *Gita.*[5]

THE universe is a manifestation of an infinite and eternal All-Existence: the Divine Being dwells in all that is; we ourselves are that in our self, in our own deepest being; our soul, the secret indwelling psychic entity, is a portion of the Divine Consciousness and Essence. This is the view we have taken of our existence; but at the same time we speak of a divine life as the culmination of the evolutionary process, and the use of the phrase implies that our present life is undivine and all the life too that is below us. At the first glance this looks like a self-contradiction; instead of making a distinction between the divine life we aspire for and a present undivine existence, it would be more logical to speak of an ascent from level to higher level of a divine manifestation. It may be admitted that essentially, if we look at the inner reality alone and discount the suggestions of the outer figure, such might be the nature of the evolution, the change we have to undergo in Nature; so it would appear perhaps to the impartial eye of a universal vision untroubled by our dualities of knowledge and ignorance, good and evil, happiness and suffering and participating in the untrammelled conscious-

[1] Verse 8. [2] IV. 10; XIV. 2. [3] I. 4. [4] II. 2. 12, 11. [5] XVIII. 61.

ness and delight of Sachchidananda. And yet, from the practical and relative point of view as distinguished from an essential vision, the distinction between the divine and the undivine has an insistent value, a very pressing significance. This then is an aspect of the problem which it is necessary to bring into the light and assess its true importance.

The distinction between the divine and the undivine life is in fact identical with the root distinction between a life of Knowledge lived in self-awareness and in the power of the Light and a life of Ignorance, — at any rate it so presents itself in a world that is slowly and with difficulty evolving out of an original Inconscience. All life that has still this Inconscience for its basis is stamped with the mark of a radical imperfection; for even if it is satisfied with its own type, it is a satisfaction with something incomplete and inharmonious, a patch-work of discords: on the contrary, even a purely mental or vital life might be perfect within its limits if it were based on a restricted but harmonious self-power and self-knowledge. It is this bondage to a perpetual stamp of imperfection and disharmony that is the mark of the undivine; a divine life, on the contrary, even if progressing from the little to the more, would be at each stage harmonious in its principle and detail: it would be a secure ground upon which freedom and perfection could naturally flower or grow towards their highest stature, refine and expand into their most subtle opulence. All imperfections, all perfections have to be taken into view in our consideration of the difference between an undivine and a divine existence: but ordinarily, when we make the distinction, we do it as human beings struggling under the pressure of life and the difficulties of our conduct amidst its immediate problems and perplexities; most of all we are thinking of the distinction we are obliged to make between good and evil or of that along with its kindred problem of the duality, the blend in us of happiness and suffering. When we seek intellectually for a divine presence in things, a divine origin of the world, a divine government of its workings, the presence of evil, the insistence on suffering, the large, the enormous part offered to pain, grief and affliction in the economy of Nature are the cruel phenomena which baffle our reason and overcome the instinctive faith of

mankind in such an origin and government or in an all-seeing, all-determining and omnipresent Divine Immanence. Other difficulties we could solve more easily and happily and make some shift to be better satisfied with the ready conclusiveness of our solutions. But this standard of judgment is not sufficiently comprehensive and it is supported upon a too human point of view; for to a wider outlook evil and suffering appear only as a striking aspect, they are not the whole defect, not even the root of the matter. The sum of the world's imperfections is not made up only of these two deficiencies; there is more than the fall, if fall there was, of our spiritual or material being from good and from happiness or our nature's failure to overcome evil and suffering. Besides the deficiency of the ethical and hedonistic satisfactions demanded by our being, the paucity of Good and Delight in our world-experience, there is also the deficiency of other divine degrees: for Knowledge, Truth, Beauty, Power, Unity are, they too, the stuff and elements of a divine life, and these are given to us in a scanty and grudging measure; yet all are, in their absolute, powers of the Divine Nature.

It is not possible then to limit the description of our and the world's undivine imperfection solely to moral evil or sensational suffering; there is more in the world-enigma than their double problem, — for they are only two strong results of a common principle. It is the general principle of imperfection that we have to admit and consider. If we look closely at this general imperfection, we shall see that it consists first in a limitation in us of the divine elements which robs them of their divinity, then in a various many-branching distortion, a perversion, a contrary turn, a falsifying departure from some ideal Truth of being. To our minds which do not possess that Truth but can conceive it, this departure presents itself either as a state from which we have lapsed spiritually or as a possibility or promise which we cannot fulfil, cannot realise because it exists only as an ideal. There has been either a lapse of the inner spirit from a greater consciousness and knowledge, delight, love and beauty, power and capacity, harmony and good, or else there is a failure of our struggling nature, an impotence to achieve what we instinctively see to be divine and desirable. If we penetrate to the cause of the fall or

the failure, we shall find that all proceeds from the one primal fact that our being, consciousness, force, experience of things represent, — not in their very self, but in their surface pragmatic nature, — a principle or an effective phenomenon of division or rupture in the unity of the Divine Existence. This division becomes in its inevitable practical effect a limitation of the divine consciousness and knowledge, the divine delight and beauty, the divine power and capacity, the divine harmony and good: there is a limitation of completeness and wholeness, a blindness in our vision of these things, a lameness in our following of them, in our experience of them a fragmentation, a diminution of power and intensity, a lowering of quality, — the mark of a descent from spiritual heights or else of a consciousness emerging from the insensible neutral monotone of the Inconscience; the intensities which are normal and natural on higher ranges are in us lost or toned down so as to harmonise with the blacks and greys of our material existence. There arises too by a secondary ulterior effect a perversion of these highest things; in our limited mentality unconsciousness and wrong consciousness intervene, ignorance covers our whole nature and, — by the misapplication or misdirection of an imperfect will and knowledge, by automatic reactions of our diminished consciousness-force and the inept poverty of our substance, — contradictions of the divine elements are formed, incapacity, inertia, falsehood, error, pain and grief, wrong-doing, discord, evil. There is too, always, somewhere hidden in our selves, nursed in our recesses, even when not overtly felt in the conscious nature, even when rejected by the parts of us which these things torture, an attachment to this experience of division, a clinging to the divided way of being which prevents the excision of these unhappinesses or their rejection and removal. For since the principle of Consciousness-Force and Ananda is at the root of all manifestation, nothing can endure if it has not a will in our nature, a sanction of the Purusha, a sustained pleasure in some part of the being, even though it be a secret or a perverse pleasure, to keep it in continuance.

When we say that all is a divine manifestation, even that which we call undivine, we mean that in its essentiality all is divine even if the form baffles or repels us. Or, to put it in a

formula to which it is easier for our psychological sense of things to give its assent, in all things there is a presence, a primal Reality, — the Self, the Divine, Brahman, — which is for ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite: its infinity is not affected by the limitations of relative things; its purity is not stained by our sin and evil; its bliss is not touched by our pain and suffering; its perfection is not impaired by our defects of consciousness, knowledge, will, unity. In certain images of the Upanishads the divine Purusha is described as the one Fire which has entered into all forms and shapes itself according to the form, as the one Sun which illumines all impartially and is not affected by the faults of our seeing. But this affirmation is not enough; it leaves the problem unsolved, why that which is in itself ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite, should not only tolerate but seem to maintain and encourage in its manifestation imperfection and limitation, impurity and suffering and falsehood and evil: it states the duality that constitutes the problem, but does not solve it.

If we simply leave these two dissonant facts of existence standing in each other's presence, we are driven to conclude that there is no reconciliation possible; all we can do is to cling as much as we can to a deepening sense of the joy of the pure and essential Presence and do the best we may with the discordant externality, until we can impose in its place the law of its divine contrary. Or else we have to seek for an escape rather than a solution. For we can say that the inner Presence alone is a Truth and the discordant externality is a falsehood or illusion created by a mysterious principle of Ignorance; our problem is to find some way of escape out of the falsehood of the manifested world into the truth of the hidden Reality. Or we may hold with the Buddhist that there is no need of explanation, since there is this one practical fact of the imperfection and impermanence of things and no Self, Divine or Brahman, for that too is an illusion of our consciousness: the one thing that is necessary for liberation is to get rid of the persistent structure of ideas and persistent energy of action which maintain a continuity in the flux of the impermanence. On this road of escape we achieve self-extinction in Nirvana; the problem of things gets itself extinguished by our own self-extinction. This is a way out, but it does not look like

the true and only way, nor are the other solutions altogether satisfactory. It is a fact that by excluding the discordant manifestation from our inner consciousness as a superficial externality, by insisting only on the pure and perfect Presence, we can achieve individually a deep and blissful sense of this silent Divinity, can enter into the sanctuary, can live in the light and the rapture. An exclusive inner concentration on the Real, the Eternal is possible, even a self-immersion by which we can lose or put away the dissonances of the universe. But there is too somewhere deep down in us the need of a total consciousness, there is in Nature a secret universal seeking for the whole Divine, an impulsion towards some entire awareness and delight and power of existence; this need of a whole being, a total knowledge, this integral will in us is not fully satisfied by these solutions. So long as the world is not divinely explained to us, the Divine remains imperfectly known; for the world too is That and, so long as it is not present to our consciousness and possessed by our powers of consciousness in the sense of the divine being, we are not in possession of the whole Divinity.

It is possible to escape from the problem otherwise; for, admitting always the essential Presence, we can endeavour to justify the divinity of the manifestation by correcting the human view of perfection or putting it aside as a too limited mental standard. We may say that not only is the Spirit in things absolutely perfect and divine, but each thing also is relatively perfect and divine in itself, in its expression of what it has to express of the possibilities of existence, in its assumption of its proper place in the complete manifestation. Each thing is divine in itself because each is a fact and idea of the divine being, knowledge and will fulfilling itself infallibly in accordance with the law of that particular manifestation. Each being is possessed of the knowledge, the force, the measure and kind of delight of existence precisely proper to its own nature; each works in the gradations of experience decreed by a secret inherent will, a native law, an intrinsic power of the self, an occult significance. It is thus perfect in the relation of its phenomena to the law of its being; for all are in harmony with that, spring out of it, adapt themselves to its purpose according to the infallibility of the divine

Will and Knowledge at work within the creature. It is perfect and divine also in relation to the whole, in its proper place in the whole; to that totality it is necessary and in it it fulfils a part by which the perfection actual and progressive of the universal harmony, the adaptation of all in it to its whole purpose and its whole sense is helped and completed. If to us things appear undivine, if we hasten to condemn this or that phenomenon as inconsistent with the nature of a divine being, it is because we are ignorant of the sense and purpose of the Divine in the world in its entirety. Because we see only parts and fragments, we judge of each by itself as if it were the whole, judge also the external phenomena without knowing their secret sense; but by doing so we vitiate our valuation of things, put on it the stamp of an initial and fundamental error. Perfection cannot reside in the thing in its separateness, for that separateness is an illusion; perfection is the perfection of the total divine harmony.

All this may be true up to a certain point and so far as it goes; but this also is a solution incomplete by itself and it cannot give us an entire satisfaction. It takes insufficient account of the human consciousness and the human view from which we have to start; it does not give us the vision of the harmony it alleges, and so it cannot meet our demand or convince, but only contradicts by a cold intellectual conception our acute human sense of the reality of evil and imperfection; it gives too no lead to the psychic element in our nature, the soul's aspiration towards light and truth and towards a spiritual conquest, a victory over imperfection and evil. By itself, this view of things amounts to little more than the facile dogma which tells us that all that is is right, because all is perfectly decreed by the divine Wisdom. It supplies us with nothing better than a complacent intellectual and philosophic optimism: no light is turned on the disconcerting facts of pain, suffering and discord to which our human consciousness bears constant and troubling witness; at most there is a suggestion that in the divine reason of things there is a key to these things to which we have no access. This is not a sufficient answer to our discontent and our aspiration which, however ignorant in their reactions, however mixed their mental motives, must correspond to a divine reality deeper down in our

being. A Divine Whole that is perfect by reason of the imperfection of its parts, runs the risk of itself being only perfect in imperfection, because it fulfils entirely some stage in an unaccomplished purpose; it is then a present but not an ultimate Totality. To it we could apply the Greek saying *Theos ouk estin alla gignetai*, the Divine is not yet in being, but is becoming. The true Divine would then be secret within us and perhaps supreme above us; to find the Divine within us and above us would be the real solution, to become perfect as That is perfect, to attain liberation by likeness to it or by attaining to the law of its nature, *sādṛśya*, *sādharmya*.

If the human consciousness were bound to the sense of imperfection and the acceptance of it as the law of our life and the very character of our existence, — a reasoned acceptance that could answer in our human nature to the blind animal acceptance of the animal nature, — then we might say that what we are marks the limit of the divine self-expression in us; we might believe too that our imperfections and sufferings worked for the general harmony and perfection of things and console ourselves with this philosophic balm offered for our wounds, satisfied to move among the pitfalls of life with as much rational prudence or as much philosophic sagacity and resignation as our incomplete mental wisdom and our impatient vital parts permitted. Or else, taking refuge in the more consoling fervours of religion, we might submit to all as the will of God in the hope or the faith of recompense in a Paradise beyond where we shall enter into a happier existence and put on a more pure and perfect nature. But there is an essential factor in our human consciousness and its workings which, no less than the reason, distinguishes it entirely from the animal; there is not only a mental part in us which recognises the imperfection, there is a psychic part which rejects it. Our soul's dissatisfaction with imperfection as a law of life upon earth, its aspiration towards the elimination of all imperfections from our nature, not only in a heaven beyond where it would be automatically impossible to be imperfect, but here and now in a life where perfection has to be conquered by evolution and struggle, are as much a law of our being as that against which they revolt; they too are divine, — a divine dissatisfaction,

a divine aspiration. In them is the inherent light of a power within which maintains them in us so that the Divine may not only be there as a hidden Reality in our spiritual secrecies but unfold itself in the evolution of Nature.

In this light we can admit that all works perfectly towards a divine end by a divine wisdom and therefore each thing is in that sense perfectly fitted in its place; but we say that that is not the whole of the divine purpose. For what is is only justifiable, finds its perfect sense and satisfaction by what can and will be. There is, no doubt, a key in the divine reason that would justify things as they are by revealing their right significance and true secret as other, subtler, deeper than their outward meaning and phenomenal appearance which is all that can normally be caught by our present intelligence: but we cannot be content with that belief, to search for and find the spiritual key of things is the law of our being. The sign of the finding is not a philosophic intellectual recognition and a resigned or sage acceptance of things as they are because of some divine sense and purpose in them which is beyond us; the real sign is an elevation towards the spiritual knowledge and power which will transform the law and phenomena and external forms of our life nearer to a true image of that divine sense and purpose. It is right and reasonable to endure with equanimity suffering and subjection to defect as the immediate will of God, a present law of imperfection laid on our members, but on condition that we recognise it also as the will of God in us to transcend evil and suffering, to transform imperfection into perfection, to rise into a higher law of Divine Nature. In our human consciousness there is the image of an ideal truth of being, a divine nature, an incipient godhead: in relation to that higher truth our present state of imperfection can be relatively described as an undivine life and the conditions of the world from which we start as undivine conditions; the imperfections are the indication given to us that they are there as first disguises, not as the intended expression of the divine being and the divine nature. It is a Power within us, the concealed Divinity, that has lit the flame of aspiration, pictures the image of the ideal, keeps alive our discontent and pushes us to throw off the disguise and to reveal or, in the Vedic phrase, to form and disclose the Godhead

in the manifest spirit, mind, life and body of this terrestrial creature. Our present nature can only be transitional, our imperfect status a starting-point and opportunity for the achievement of another higher, wider and greater that shall be divine and perfect not only by the secret spirit within it but in its manifest and most outward form of existence.

But these conclusions are only first reasonings or primary intuitions founded on our inner self-experience and the apparent facts of universal existence. They cannot be entirely validated unless we know the real cause of ignorance, imperfection and suffering and their place in the cosmic purpose or cosmic order. There are three propositions about God and the world, — if we admit the Divine Existence, — to which the general reason and consciousness of mankind bear witness; but, one of the three, — which is yet necessitated by the character of the world we live in, — does not harmonise with the two others, and by this disharmony the human mind is thrown into great perplexities of contradiction and driven to doubt and denial. For, first, we find affirmed an omnipresent Divinity and Reality pure, perfect and blissful, without whom, apart from whom nothing could exist, since all exists only by him and in his being. All thinking on the subject that is not atheistic or materialistic or else primitive and anthropomorphic, has to start from this admission or to arrive at this fundamental concept. It is true that certain religions seem to suppose an extracosmic Deity who has created a world outside and apart from his own existence; but when they come to construct a theology or spiritual philosophy, these too admit omnipresence or immanence, — for this omnipresence imposes itself, is a necessity of spiritual thinking. If there is such a Divinity, Self or Reality, it must be everywhere, one and indivisible, nothing can possibly exist apart from its existence; nothing can be born from another than That; there can be nothing unsupported by That, independent of It, unfilled by the breath and power of Its being. It has been held indeed that the ignorance, the imperfection, the suffering of this world are not supported by the Divine Existence; but we have then to suppose two Gods, an Ormuzd of the good and an Ahriman of the evil or, perhaps, a perfect supracosmic and immanent Being and an imperfect

cosmic Demiurge or separate undivine Nature. This is a possible conception but improbable to our highest intelligence, — it can only be at most a subordinate aspect, not the original truth or the whole truth of things; nor can we suppose that the one Self and Spirit in all and the one Power creator of all are different, contrary in the character of their being, separate in their will and purpose. Our reason tells us, our intuitive consciousness feels, and their witness is confirmed by spiritual experience, that the one pure and absolute Existence exists in all things and beings even as all things and beings exist in It and by It, and nothing can be or happen without this indwelling and all-supporting Presence.

A second affirmation, which our mind naturally accepts as the consequence of the first postulate, is that by the supreme consciousness and the supreme power of this omnipresent Divinity in its perfect universal knowledge and divine wisdom all things are ordered and governed in their fundamental relations and their process. But, on the other hand, the actual process of things, the actual relations which we see are, as presented to our human consciousness, relations of imperfection, of limitation; there appears a disharmony, even a perversion, something that is the contrary of our conception of the Divine Existence, a very apparent denial or at least a disfigurement or disguise of the Divine Presence. There arises then a third affirmation of the Divine Reality and the world reality as different in essence or in order, so different that we have to draw away from one to reach the other; if we would find the Divine Inhabitant, we must reject the world he inhabits, governs, has created or manifested in his own existence. The first of these three propositions is inevitable; the second also must stand if the omnipresent Divine has anything at all to do with the world he inhabits and with its manifestation, building, maintenance and government: but the third seems also self-evident and yet it is incompatible with its precedents, and this dissonance confronts us with a problem which appears to be incapable of satisfactory solution.

It is not difficult by some construction of the philosophic reason or of theological reasoning to circumvent the difficulty. It is possible to erect a fainéant Deity, like the gods of Epicurus,

blissful in himself, observing but indifferent to a world conducted or misconducted by a mechanical law of Nature. It is open to us to posit a Witness Self, a silent Soul in things, a Purusha who allows Nature to do what she will and is content to reflect all her order and all her disorders in his passive and stainless consciousness, — or a supreme Self absolute, inactive, free from all relations, unconcerned with the works of the cosmic Illusion or Creation which has mysteriously or paradoxically originated from It or over against It to tempt and afflict a world of temporal creatures. But all these solutions do no more than reflect the apparent dissonance of our twofold experience; they do not attempt to reconcile, neither do they solve or explain it, but only reaffirm it by an open or covert dualism and an essential division of the Indivisible. Practically, there is affirmed a dual Godhead, Self or Soul and Nature: but Nature, the Power in things, cannot be anything else than a power of the Self, the Soul, the essential Being of things; her works cannot be altogether independent of Soul or Self, cannot be her own contrary result and working unaffected by its consent or refusal or a violence of mechanical Force imposed on an inertia of mechanical Passivity. It is possible again to posit an observing inactive Self and an active creating Godhead; but this device cannot serve us, for in the end these two must really be one in a dual aspect, — the Godhead the active aspect of the observing Self, the Self a witness of its own Godhead in action. A discord, a gulf between the Self in knowledge and the same Self in its works needs explanation, but it presents itself as unexplained and inexplicable. Or, again, we can posit a double consciousness of Brahman the Reality, one static and one dynamic, one essential and spiritual in which it is Self perfect and absolute, another formative, pragmatic, in which it becomes not-self and with which its absoluteness and perfection have no concern of participation; for it is only a temporal formation in the timeless Reality. But to us who even if only half-existent, half-conscious, yet inhabit the Absolute's half-dream of living and are compelled by Nature to have in it a terrible and insistent concern and to deal with it as real, this wears the appearance of an obvious mystification; for this temporal consciousness and its formations are also

in the end a Power of the one Self, depend upon it, can exist only by it; what exists by the power of the Reality cannot be unrelated to It or That unrelated to the world of its own Power's making. If the world exists by the supreme Spirit, so also its ordering and relations must exist by the power of the Spirit; its law must be according to some law of the spiritual consciousness and existence. The Self, the Reality must be aware of and aware in the world-consciousness which exists in its being; a power of the Self, the Reality must be constantly determining or at least sanctioning its phenomena and operations: for there can be no independent power, no Nature not derived from the original and eternal Self-Existence. If it does no more, it must still be originating or determining the universe through the mere fact of its conscious omnipresence. It is, no doubt, a truth of spiritual experience that there is a status of peace and silence in the Infinite behind the cosmic activity, a Consciousness that is the immobile Witness of the creation; but this is not the whole of spiritual experience, and we cannot hope to find in one side only of knowledge a fundamental and total explanation of the Universe.

Once we admit a divine government of the universe, we must conclude that the power to govern is complete and absolute; for otherwise we are obliged to suppose that a being and consciousness infinite and absolute has a knowledge and will limited in their control of things or hampered in their power of working. It is not impossible to concede that the supreme and immanent Divinity may leave a certain freedom of working to something that has come into being in his perfection but is itself imperfect and the cause of imperfection, to an ignorant or inconscient Nature, to the action of the human mind and will, even to a conscious Power or Forces of darkness and evil that take their stand upon the reign of a basic Inconscience. But none of these things are independent of Its own existence, nature and consciousness and none of them can act except in Its presence and by Its sanction or allowance. Man's freedom is relative and he cannot be held solely responsible for the imperfection of his nature. Ignorance and inconscience of Nature have arisen, not independently, but in the one Being; the imperfection of her workings cannot be entirely foreign to some will of the Immanence. It may be con-

ceded that forces set in motion are allowed to work themselves out according to the law of their movement; but what divine Omniscience and Omnipotence has allowed to arise and act in Its omnipresence, Its all-existence, we must consider It to have originated and decreed, since without the fiat of the Being they could not have been, could not remain in existence. If the Divine is at all concerned with the world he has manifested, there is no other Lord than He and from that necessity of His original and universal being there can eventually be no escape or departure. It is on the foundation of this self-evident consequence of our first premiss, without any evasion of its implications, that we have to consider the problem of imperfection, suffering and evil.

And first we must realise that the existence of ignorance, error, limitation, suffering, division and discord in the world need not by itself, as we too hastily imagine, be a denial or a disproof of the divine being, consciousness, power, knowledge, will, delight in the universe. They can be that if we have to take them by themselves separately, but need not be so taken if we get a clear vision of their place and significance in a complete view of the universal workings. A part broken off from the whole may be imperfect, ugly, incomprehensible; but when we see it in the whole, it recovers its place in the harmony, it has a meaning and a use. The Divine Reality is infinite in its being; in this infinite being, we find limited being everywhere, — that is the apparent fact from which our existence here seems to start and to which our own narrow ego and its ego-centric activities bear constant witness. But, in reality, when we come to an integral self-knowledge, we find that we are not limited, for we also are infinite. Our ego is only a face of the universal being and has no separate existence; our apparent separative individuality is only a surface movement and behind it our real individuality stretches out to unity with all things and upward to oneness with the transcendent Divine Infinity. Thus our ego, which seems to be a limitation of existence, is really a power of infinity; the boundless multiplicity of beings in the world is a result and signal evidence, not of limitation or finiteness, but of that illimitable Infinity. Apparent division can never erect itself into a real separateness; there is supporting and overriding it an indivisible

unity which division itself cannot divide. This fundamental world-fact of ego and apparent division and their separative workings in the world existence is no denial of the Divine Nature of unity and indivisible being; they are the surface results of an infinite multiplicity which is a power of the infinite Oneness.

There is then no real division or limitation of being, no fundamental contradiction of the omnipresent Reality; but there does seem to be a real limitation of consciousness: there is an ignorance of self, a veiling of the inner Divinity, and all imperfection is its consequence. For we identify ourselves mentally, vitally, physically with this superficial ego-consciousness which is our first insistent self-experience; this does impose on us, not a fundamentally real, but a practical division with all the untoward consequences of that separateness from the Reality. But here again we have to discover that from the point of view of God's workings, whatever be our reactions or our experience on the surface, this fact of ignorance is itself an operation of knowledge and not a true ignorance. Its phenomenon of ignorance is a superficial movement; for behind it is an indivisible all-consciousness: the ignorance is a frontal power of that all-consciousness which limits itself in a certain field, within certain boundaries to a particular operation of knowledge, a particular mode of conscious working, and keeps back all the rest of its knowledge in waiting as a force behind it. All that is thus hidden is an occult store of light and power for the All-Consciousness to draw upon for the evolution of our being in Nature; there is a secret working which fills up all the deficiencies of the frontal Ignorance, acts through its apparent stumblings, prevents them from leading to another final result than that which the All-Knowledge has decreed, helps the soul in the Ignorance to draw from its experience, even from the natural personality's sufferings and errors, what is necessary for its evolution and to leave behind what is no longer utilisable. This frontal power of Ignorance is a power of concentration in a limited working, much like that power in our human mentality by which we absorb ourselves in a particular object and in a particular work and seem to use only so much knowledge, only such ideas as are necessary for it, — the rest, which are alien to it or would interfere with it, are put back

for the moment: yet, in reality, all the time it is the indivisible consciousness which we are that has done the work to be done, seen the thing that has to be seen, — that and not any fragment of consciousness or any exclusive ignorance in us is the silent knower and worker: so is it too with this frontal power of concentration of the All-Consciousness within us.

In our valuation of the movements of our consciousness this ability of concentration is rightly held to be one of the greatest powers of the human mentality. But equally the power of putting forth what seems to be an exclusive working of limited knowledge, that which presents itself to us as ignorance, must be considered one of the greatest powers of the divine Consciousness. It is only a supreme self-possessing Knowledge which can thus be powerful to limit itself in the act and yet work out perfectly all its intentions through that apparent ignorance. In the universe we see this supreme self-possessing Knowledge work through a multitude of ignorances, each striving to act according to its own blindness, yet through them all it constructs and executes its universal harmonies. More, the miracle of its omniscience appears most strikingly of all in what seems to us the action of an Inconscient, when through the complete or the partial nescience, — more thick than our ignorance, — of the electron, atom, cell, plant, insect, the lowest forms of animal life, it arranges perfectly its order of things and guides the instinctive impulse or the inconscient impetus to an end possessed by the All-Knowledge but held behind a veil, not known by the instrumental form of existence, yet perfectly operative within the instinct or the impetus. We may say then that this action of the ignorance or nescience is no real ignorance, but a power, a sign, a proof of an omniscient self-knowledge and all-knowledge. If we need any personal and inner witness to this indivisible All-Consciousness behind the ignorance, — all Nature is its external proof, — we can get it with any completeness only in our deeper inner being or larger and higher spiritual state when we draw back behind the veil of our own surface ignorance and come into contact with the divine Idea and Will behind it. Then we see clearly enough that what we have done by ourselves in our ignorance was yet overseen and guided in its result by the

invisible Omniscience; we discover a greater working behind our ignorant working and begin to glimpse its purpose in us: then only can we see and know what now we worship in faith, recognise wholly the pure and universal Presence, meet the Lord of all being and all Nature.

As with the cause, — the Ignorance, — so is it with the consequences of the Ignorance. All this that seems to us incapacity, weakness, impotence, limitation of power, our will's hampered struggle and fettered labour, takes from the point of view of the Divine in his self-workings the aspect of a just limitation of an omniscient power by the free will of that Power itself so that the surface energy shall be in exact correspondence with the work that it has to do, with its attempt, its allotted success or its destined because necessary failure, with the balance of the sum of forces in which it is a part and with the larger result of which its own results are an indivisible portion. Behind this limitation of power is the All-Power and in the limitation that All-Power is at work; but it is through the sum of many limited workings that the indivisible Omnipotence executes infallibly and sovereignly its purposes. This power to limit its force and to work through that self-limitation, by what we call labour, struggle, difficulty, by what seems to us a series of failures or half-baulked successes and through them to achieve its secret intention, is not therefore a sign, proof or reality of weakness, but a sign, proof, reality, — the greatest possible, — of an absolute omnipotence.

As to the suffering, which is so great a stumbling-block to our understanding of the universe, it is evidently a consequence of the limitation of consciousness, the restriction of force which prevents us from mastering or assimilating the touch of what is to us other-force: the result of this incapacity and disharmony is that the delight of the touch cannot be seized and it affects our sense with a reaction of discomfort or pain, a defect or excess, a discord resultant in inner or outer injury, born of division between our power of being and the power of being that meets us. Behind in our self and spirit is the All-Delight of the universal being which takes its account of the contact, a delight first in the enduring and then in the conquest of the suffering and finally in its transmutation that shall come hereafter; for pain

and suffering are a perverse and contrary term of the delight of existence and they can turn into their opposite, even into the original All-Delight, Ananda. This All-Delight is not present in the universal alone, but it is here secret in ourselves, as we discover when we go back from our outward consciousness into the Self within us; the psychic being in us takes its account even of its most perverse or contrary as well as its more benign experiences and grows by the rejection of them or acceptance; it extracts a divine meaning and use from our most poignant sufferings, difficulties, misfortunes. Nothing but this All-Delight could dare or bear to impose such experiences on itself or on us; nothing else could turn them thus to its own utility and our spiritual profit. So too nothing but an inalienable harmony of being inherent in an inalienable unity of being would throw out so many harshest apparent discords and yet force them to its purpose so that in the end they are unable to do anything else but to serve and secure, and even themselves change into elements that constitute, a growing universal rhythm and ultimate harmony. At every turn it is the divine Reality which we can discover behind that which we are yet compelled by the nature of the superficial consciousness in which we dwell to call undivine and in a sense are right in using that appellation; for these appearances are a veil over the Divine Perfection, a veil necessary for the present, but not at all the true and complete figure.

But even when we thus regard the universe, we cannot and ought not to dismiss as entirely and radically false and unreal the values that are given to it by our own limited human consciousness. For grief, pain, suffering, error, falsehood, ignorance, weakness, wickedness, incapacity, non-doing of what should be done and wrong-doing, deviation of will and denial of will, egoism, limitation, division from other beings with whom we should be one, all that makes up the effective figure of what we call evil, are facts of the world-consciousness, not fictions and unrealities, although they are facts whose complete sense or true value is not that which we assign to them in our ignorance. Still our sense of them is part of a true sense, our values of them are necessary to their complete values. One side of the truth of these things we discover when we get into a deeper and larger con-

sciousness; for we find then that there is a cosmic and individual utility in what presents itself to us as adverse and evil. For without experience of pain we would not get all the infinite value of the divine delight of which pain is in travail, all ignorance is a penumbra which environs an orb of knowledge, every error is significant of the possibility and the effort of a discovery of truth; every weakness and failure is a first sounding of gulfs of power and potentiality; all division is intended to enrich by an experience of various sweetness of unification the joy of realised unity. All this imperfection is to us evil, but all evil is in travail of the eternal good; for all is an imperfection which is the first condition, — in the law of life evolving out of Inconscience, — of a greater perfection in the manifesting of the hidden divinity. But at the same time our present feeling of this evil and imperfection, the revolt of our consciousness against them is also a necessary valuation; for if we have first to face and endure them, the ultimate command on us is to reject, to overcome, to transform the life and the nature. It is for that end that their insistence is not allowed to slacken; the soul must learn the results of the Ignorance, must begin to feel their reactions as a spur to its endeavour of mastery and conquest and finally to a greater endeavour of transformation and transcendence. It is possible, when we live inwardly in the depths, to arrive at a state of vast inner equality and peace which is untouched by the reactions of the outer nature, and that is a great but incomplete liberation, — for the outer nature too has a right to deliverance. But even if our personal deliverance is complete, still there is the suffering of others, the world travail, which the great of soul cannot regard with indifference. There is a unity with all beings which something within us feels and the deliverance of others must be felt as intimate to its own deliverance.

This then is the law of the manifestation, the reason of the imperfection here. True, it is a law of manifestation only and, even, a law special to this movement in which we live, and we may say that it need not have been, — if there were no movement of manifestation or not this movement; but, the manifestation and the movement being given, the law is necessary. It is not enough simply to say that the law and all its circumstances

are an unreality created by the mental consciousness, non-existent in God, and to be indifferent to these dualities or to get out of the manifestation into God's pure being is the only wisdom. It is true they are creations of mind Consciousness, but Mind is only secondarily responsible; in a deeper reality they are, as we have seen already, creations of the Divine Consciousness projecting mind away from its all-knowledge so as to realise these opposite or contrary values of its all-power, all-knowledge, all-delight, all-being and unity. Obviously, this action and these fruits of the Divine Consciousness can be called by us unreal in the sense of not being the eternal and fundamental truth of being or can be taxed with falsehood because they contradict what is originally and eventually the truth of being; but, all the same, they have their persistent reality and importance in our present phase of the manifestation, nor can they be a mere mistake of the Divine Consciousness without any meaning in the divine wisdom, without any purpose of the divine joy, power and knowledge to justify their existence. Justification there must be even if it reposes for us upon a mystery which may confront us, so long as we live in a surface experience, as an insoluble riddle.

But if, accepting this side of Nature, we say that all things are fixed in their statutory and stationary law of being, and man too must be fixed in his imperfections, his ignorance and sin and weakness and vileness and suffering, our life loses its true significance. Man's perpetual attempt to arise out of the darkness and insufficiency of his nature can then have no issue in the world itself, in life itself; its one issue, if there is any, must be by an escape out of life, out of the world, out of his human existence and therefore out of its eternally unsatisfactory law of imperfect being, either into a heaven of the gods or of God or into the pure ineffability of the Absolute. If so, man can never really deliver out of the ignorance and falsehood the truth and knowledge, out of the evil and ugliness the good and beauty, out of the weakness and vileness the power and glory, out of the grief and suffering the joy and delight which are contained in the Spirit behind them and of which these contradictions are the first adverse and contrary conditions of emergence. All he can do is to cut the

imperfections away from him and overpass too their balancing opposites, imperfect also, — leave with the ignorance the human knowledge, with the evil the human good, with the weakness the human strength and power, with the strife and suffering the human love and joy; for these are in our present nature inseparably entwined together, look like conjoint dualities, negative pole and positive pole of the same unreality, and since they cannot be elevated and transformed, they must be both abandoned: humanity cannot be fulfilled in divinity; it must cease, be left behind and rejected. Whether the result will be an individual enjoyment of the absolute divine nature or of the Divine Presence or a Nirvana in the featureless Absolute, is a point on which religions and philosophies differ: but in either case human existence on earth must be taken as condemned to eternal imperfection by the very law of its being; it is perpetually and unchangeably an undivine manifestation in the Divine Existence. The soul by taking on manhood, perhaps by the very fact of birth itself, has fallen from the Divine, has committed an original sin or error which it must be man's spiritual aim, as soon as he is enlightened, thoroughly to cancel, unflinchingly to eliminate.

In that case, the only reasonable explanation of such a paradoxical manifestation or creation is that it is a cosmic game, a Lila, a play, an amusement of the Divine Being. It may be he pretends to be undivine, wears that appearance like the mask or make-up of an actor for the sole pleasure of the pretence or the drama. Or else he has created the undivine, created ignorance, sin and suffering just for the joy of a manifold creation. Or, perhaps, as some religions curiously suppose, he has done this so that there may be inferior creatures who will praise and glorify Him for his eternal goodness, wisdom, bliss and omnipotence and try feebly to come an inch nearer to the goodness in order to share the bliss, on pain of punishment, — by some supposed eternal, — if, as the vast majority must by their very imperfection, they fail in their endeavour. But to the doctrine of such a Lila so crudely stated there is always possible the retort that a God, himself all-blissful, who delights in the suffering of creatures or imposes such suffering on them for the faults of his own imperfect

creation, would be no Divinity and against him the moral being and intelligence of humanity must revolt or deny his existence. But if the human soul is a portion of the Divinity, if it is a divine Spirit in man that puts on this imperfection and in the form of humanity consents to bear this suffering, or if the soul in humanity is meant to be drawn to the Divine Spirit and is his associate in the play of imperfection here, in the delight of perfect being otherwhere, the Lila may still remain a paradox, but it ceases to be a cruel or revolting paradox; it can at most be regarded as a strange mystery and to the reason inexplicable. To explain it there must be two missing elements, a conscious assent by the soul to this manifestation and a reason in the All-Wisdom that makes the play significant and intelligible.

The strangeness of the play diminishes, the paradox loses its edge of sharpness if we discover that, although fixed grades exist each with its appropriate order of nature, they are only firm steps for a progressive ascent of the souls embodied in forms of matter, a progressive divine manifestation which rises from the inconscient to the superconscient or all-conscient status with the human consciousness as its decisive point of transition. Imperfection becomes then a necessary term of the manifestation: for, since all the divine nature is concealed but present in the Inconscient, it must be gradually delivered out of it; this graduation necessitates a partial unfolding, and this partial character or incompleteness of the unfolding necessitates imperfection. An evolutionary manifestation demands a mid-stage with gradations above and under it, — precisely such a stage as the mental consciousness of man, part knowledge, part ignorance, a middle power of being still leaning on the Inconscient but slowly rising towards the all-conscious Divine Nature. A partial unfolding implying imperfection and ignorance may take as its inevitable companion, perhaps its basis for certain movements, an apparent perversion of the original truth of being. For the ignorance or imperfection to endure there must be a seeming contrary of all that characterises the divine nature, its unity, its all-consciousness, its all-power, its all-harmony, its all-good, its all-delight; there must appear limitation, discord, unconsciousness, disharmony, incapacity, insensibility and suffering, evil.

For without that perversion imperfection could have no strong standing-ground, could not so freely manifest and maintain its nature as against the presence of the underlying Divinity. A partial knowledge is imperfect knowledge and imperfect knowledge is to that extent ignorance, a contrary of the divine nature: but in its outlook on what is beyond its knowledge, this contrary negative becomes a contrary positive; it originates error, wrong knowledge, wrong dealing with things, with life, with action; the wrong knowledge becomes a wrong will in the nature, at first, it may be, wrong by mistake, but afterwards wrong by choice, by attachment, by delight in the falsehood, — the simple contrary turns into a complex perversion. Inconscience and ignorance once admitted, these form a natural result in a logical sequence and have to be admitted also as necessary factors. The only question is the reason why this kind of progressive manifestation was itself necessary; that is the sole point left obscure to the intelligence.

A manifestation of this kind, self-creation or Lila, would not seem justifiable if it were imposed on the unwilling creature; but it will be evident that the assent of the embodied spirit must be there already, for Prakriti cannot act without the assent of the Purusha. There must have been not only the will of the Divine Purusha to make the cosmic creation possible, but the assent of the individual Purusha to make the individual manifestation possible. But it may be said that the reason for the Divine Will and delight in such a difficult and tormented progressive manifestation and the reason for the soul's assent to it is still a mystery. But it is not altogether a mystery if we look at our own nature and can suppose some kindred movement of being in the beginning as its cosmic origin. On the contrary, a play of self-concealing and self-finding is one of the most strenuous joys that conscious being can give to itself, a play of extreme attractiveness. There is no greater pleasure for man himself than a victory which is in its very principle a conquest over difficulties, a victory in knowledge, a victory in power, a victory in creation over the impossibilities of creation, a delight in the conquest over an anguished toil and a hard ordeal of suffering. At the end of separation is the intense joy of union, the joy of a meeting with a self

from which we were divided. There is an attraction in ignorance itself because it provides us with the joy of discovery, the surprise of new and unforeseen creation, a great adventure of the soul; there is a joy of the journey and the search and the finding, a joy of the battle and the crown, the labour and the reward of labour. If delight of existence be the secret of creation, this too is one delight of existence; it can be regarded as the reason or at least one reason of this apparently paradoxical and contrary Lila. But, apart from this choice of the individual Purusha, there is a deeper truth inherent in the original Existence which finds its expression in the plunge into Inconscience; its result is a new affirmation of Sachchidananda in its apparent opposite. If the Infinite's right of various self-manifestation is granted, this too as a possibility of its manifestation is intelligible and has its profound significance.

CHAPTER V

The Cosmic Illusion; Mind, Dream and Hallucination

> Thou who hast come to this transient and unhappy world, turn to Me.
>
> *Gita.*[1]

> This Self is a self of Knowledge, an inner light in the heart; he is the conscious being common to all the states of being and moves in both worlds. He becomes a dream-self and passes beyond this world and its forms of death.... There are two planes of this conscious being, this and the other worlds; a third state is their place of joining, the state of dream, and when he stands in this place of their joining, he sees both planes of his existence, this world and the other world. When he sleeps, he takes the substance of this world in which all is and himself undoes and himself builds by his own illumination, his own light; when this conscious being sleeps, he becomes luminous with his self-light.... There are no roads nor chariots, nor joys nor pleasures, nor tanks nor ponds nor rivers, but he creates them by his own light, for he is the maker. By sleep he casts off his body and unsleeping sees those that sleep; he preserves by his life-breath this lower nest and goes forth, immortal, from his nest; immortal, he goes where he wills, the golden Purusha, the solitary Swan. They say, "the country of waking only is his, for the things which he sees when awake, these only he sees when asleep"; but there he is his own self-light.
>
> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*[2]

> What is seen and what is not seen, what is experienced and what is not experienced, what is and what is not, — all it sees, it is all and sees.
>
> *Prasna Upanishad.*[3]

ALL human thought, all mental man's experience moves between a constant affirmation and negation; there is for his mind no truth of idea, no result of experience that cannot be affirmed, none that cannot be negated. It has negated the existence of the individual being, negated the existence of the cosmos, negated the existence of any immanent or underlying Reality, negated any Reality beyond the individual and the cosmos; but it is also constantly affirming these things, — sometimes one of

[1] IX. 33. [2] IV. 3. 7, 9-12, 14. [3] IV. 5.

them solely or any two or all of them together. It has to do so because our thinking mind is in its very nature an ignorant dealer in possibilities, not possessing the truth behind any of them, but sounding and testing each in turn or many together if so perchance it may get at some settled belief or knowledge about them, some certitude; yet, living in a world of relativities and possibilities, it can arrive at no final certainty, no absolute and abiding conviction. Even the actual, the realised can present itself to our mentality as a "may be or may not be", *syād vā na syād vā*, or as an "is" under the shadow of the "might not have been" and wearing the aspect of that which will not be hereafter. Our life-being is also afflicted by the same incertitude; it can rest in no aim of living from which it can derive a sure or final satisfaction or to which it can assign an enduring value. Our nature starts from facts and actualities which it takes for real; it is pushed beyond them into a pursuit of uncertain possibilities and led eventually to question all that it took as real. For it proceeds from a fundamental ignorance and has no hold on assured truth; all the truths on which it relies for a time are found to be partial, incomplete and questionable.

At the outset man lives in his physical mind which perceives the actual, the physical, the objective and accepts it as fact and this fact as self-evident truth beyond question; whatever is not actual, not physical, not objective it regards as unreal or unrealised, only to be accepted as entirely real when it has succeeded in becoming actual, becoming a physical fact, becoming objective: its own being too it regards as an objective fact, warranted to be real by its existence in a visible and sensible body; all other subjective beings and things it accepts on the same evidence in so far as they can become objects of our external consciousness or acceptable to that part of the reason which builds upon the data supplied by that consciousness and relies upon them as the one solid basis of knowledge. Physical Science is a vast extension of this mentality: it corrects the errors of the sense and pushes beyond the first limitations of the sense-mind by discovering means of bringing facts and objects not seizable by our corporeal organs into the field of objectivity; but it has the same standard of reality, the objective, the physical actuality; its test

of the real is possibility of verification by positive reason and objective evidence.

But man also has a life-mind, a vital mentality which is an instrument of desire: this is not satisfied with the actual, it is a dealer in possibilities; it has the passion for novelty and is seeking always to extend the limits of experience for the satisfaction of desire, for enjoyment, for an enlarged self-affirmation and aggrandisement of its terrain of power and profit. It desires, enjoys, possesses actualities, but it hunts also after unrealised possibilities, is ardent to materialise them, to possess and enjoy them also. It is not satisfied with the physical and objective only, but seeks too a subjective, an imaginative, a purely emotive satisfaction and pleasure. If there were not this factor, the physical mind of man left to itself would live like the animal, accepting his first actual physical life and its limits as his whole possibility, moving in material Nature's established order and asking for nothing beyond it. But this vital mind, this unquiet life-will comes in with its demands and disturbs this inert or routine satisfaction which lives penned within the bounds of actuality; it enlarges always desire and craving, creates a dissatisfaction, an unrest, a seeking for something more than what life seems able to give it: it brings about a vast enlargement of the field of physical actuality by the actualisation of our unrealised possibilities, but also a constant demand for more and always more, a quest for new worlds to conquer, an incessant drive towards an exceeding of the bounds of circumstance and a self-exceeding. To add to this cause of unrest and incertitude there comes in a thinking mind that inquires into everything, questions everything, builds up affirmations and unbuilds them, erects systems of certitude but finally accepts none of them as certain, affirms and questions the evidence of the senses, follows out the conclusions of the reason but undoes them again to arrive at different or quite opposite conclusions, and continues indefinitely if not *ad infinitum* this process. This is the history of human thought and human endeavour, a constant breaking of bounds only to move always in the same spirals enlarged perhaps but following the same or constantly similar curves of direction. The mind of humanity, ever seeking, ever active, never arrives

at a firmly settled reality of life's aims and objects or at a settled reality of its own certitudes and convictions, an established foundation or firm formation of its idea of existence.

At a certain point of this constant unrest and travail even the physical mind loses its conviction of objective certitude and enters into an agnosticism which questions all its own standards of life and knowledge, doubts whether all this is real or else whether all, even if real, is not futile; the vital mind, baffled by life and frustrated or else dissatisfied with all its satisfactions, overtaken by a deep disgust and disappointment, finds that all is vanity and vexation of spirit and is ready to reject life and existence as an unreality, all that it hunted after as an illusion, Maya; the thinking mind, unbuilding all its affirmations, discovers that all are mere mental constructions and there is no reality in them or else that the only reality is something beyond this existence, something that has not been made or constructed, something Absolute and Eternal, — all that is relative, all that is of time is a dream, a hallucination of the mind or a vast delirium, an immense cosmic Illusion, a delusive figure of apparent existence. The principle of negation prevails over the principle of affirmation and becomes universal and absolute. Thence arise the great world-negating religions and philosophies; thence too a recoil of the life-motive from itself and a seeking after a life elsewhere flawless and eternal or a will to annul life itself in an immobile Reality or an original Non-Existence. In India the philosophy of world-negation has been given formulations of supreme power and value by two of the greatest of her thinkers, Buddha and Shankara. There have been, intermediate or later in time, other philosophies of considerable importance, some of them widely accepted, formulated with much acumen of thought by men of genius and spiritual insight, which disputed with more or less force and success the conclusions of these two great metaphysical systems, but none has been put forward with an equal force of presentation or drive of personality or had a similar massive effect. The spirit of these two remarkable spiritual philosophies, — for Shankara in the historical process of India's philosophical mind takes up, completes and replaces Buddha, — has weighed with a tremendous power on her thought, religion

and general mentality: everywhere broods its mighty shadow, everywhere is the impress of the three great formulas, the chain of Karma, escape from the wheel of rebirth, Maya. It is necessary therefore to look afresh at the Idea or Truth behind the negation of cosmic existence and to consider, however briefly, what is the value of its main formulations or suggestions, on what reality they stand, how far they are imperative to the reason or to experience. For the present it will be enough to throw a regard on the principal ideas which are grouped around the conception of the great cosmic Illusion, Maya, and to set against them those that are proper to our own line of thought and vision; for both proceed from the conception of the One Reality, but one line leads to a universal Illusionism, the other to a universal Realism, — an unreal or real-unreal universe reposing on a transcendent Reality or a real universe reposing on a Reality at once universal and transcendent or absolute.

In itself and by itself the vital being's aversion, the life-mind's recoil from life cannot be taken as valid or conclusive. Its strongest motive is a sense of disappointment and an acceptance of frustration which has no greater claim to conclusiveness than the idealist's opposite motive of invariable hope and his faith and will to realise. Nevertheless there is a certain validity in the mental support of this sense of frustration, in the perception at which the thinking mind arrives that there is an illusion behind all human effort and terrestrial endeavour, the illusion of his political and social gospels, the illusion of his ethical efforts at perfection, the illusion of philanthropy and service, the illusion of works, the illusion of fame, power, success, the illusion of all achievement. Human, social and political endeavour turns always in a circle and leads nowhere; man's life and nature remain always the same, always imperfect, and neither laws nor institutions nor education nor philosophy nor morality nor religious teachings have succeeded in producing the perfect man, still less a perfect humanity, — straighten the tail of the dog as you will, it has been said, it always resumes its natural curve of crookedness. Altruism, philanthropy and service, Christian love or Buddhist compassion have not made the world a whit happier, they only

give infinitesimal bits of momentary relief here and there, throw drops on the fire of the world's suffering. All aims are in the end transitory and futile, all achievements unsatisfying or evanescent; all works are so much labour of effort and success and failure which consummate nothing definitive: whatever changes are made in human life are of the form only and these forms pursue each other in a futile circle; for the essence of life, its general character remains the same for ever. This view of things may be exaggerated, but it has an undeniable force; it is supported by the experience of man's centuries and it carries in itself a significance which at one time or another comes upon the mind with an overwhelming air of self-evidence. Not only so, but if it is true that the fundamental laws and values of terrestrial existence are fixed or that it must always turn in repeated cycles,—and this has been for long a very prevalent notion, — then this view of things in the end is hardly escapable. For imperfection, ignorance, frustration and suffering are a dominant factor of the existing world-order, the elements contrary to them, knowledge, happiness, success, perfection are constantly found to be deceptive or inconclusive: the two opposites are so inextricably mixed that, if this state of things is not a motion towards a greater fulfilment, if this is the permanent character of the world-order, then it is hard to avoid the conclusion that all here is either the creation of an inconscient Energy, which would account for the incapacity of an apparent consciousness to arrive at anything, or intentionally a world of ordeal and failure, the issue being not here but elsewhere, or even a vast and aimless cosmic Illusion.

Among these alternative conclusions the second, as it is usually put before us, offers no ground for the philosophic reason, since we have no satisfying indication of the connection between the here and the elsewhere which are posited against each other but not explained in the inevitability of their relations, and there is no light cast on the necessity or fundamental significance of the ordeal and failure. It could only be intelligible, — except as the mysterious will of an arbitrary Creator, — if there was a choice by immortal spirits to try the adventure of the Ignorance and a necessity for them to learn the nature

of a world of Ignorance in order that they might reject it. But such a creative motive, necessarily incidental and quite temporary in its incidence, with the earth as its casual field of experience, could hardly by itself account for the immense and enduring phenomenon of this complex universe. It can become an operative part of a satisfactory explanation if this world is the field for the working out of a greater creative motive, if it is a manifestation of a divine Truth or a divine Possibility in which under certain conditions an initiating Ignorance must intervene as a necessary factor, and if the arrangement of this universe contains in it a compulsion of the Ignorance to move towards Knowledge, of the imperfect manifestation to grow into perfection, of the frustration to serve as steps towards a final victory, of the suffering to prepare an emergence of the divine Delight of Being. In that case the sense of disappointment, frustration, illusion and the vanity of all things would not be valid; for the aspects that seem to justify it would be only the natural circumstances of a difficult evolution: all the stress of struggle and effort, success and failure, joy and suffering, the mixture of ignorance and knowledge would be the experience needed for the soul, mind, life and physical part to grow into the full light of a spiritual perfected being. It would reveal itself as the process of an evolutionary manifestation; there would be no need to bring in the fiat of an arbitrary Omnipotence or a cosmic Illusion, a phantasy of meaningless Maya.

But there is too a higher mental and spiritual basis for the philosophy of world-negation and here we are on more solid ground: for it can be contended that the world is in its very nature an illusion and no reasoning from the features and circumstances of an Illusion could justify it or raise it into a Reality, — there is only one Reality, the transcendent, the supracosmic: no divine fulfilment, even if our life were to grow into the life of gods, could nullify or cancel the original unreality which is its fundamental character; for that fulfilment would be only the bright side of an Illusion. Or even if not absolutely an illusion, it would be a reality of an inferior order and must come to an end by the soul's recognition that the Brahman alone is true, that there is nothing but the transcendent

and immutable Absolute. If this is the one Truth, then all ground is cut away from under our feet; the divine Manifestation, the victory of the soul in Matter, its mastery over existence, the divine life in Nature would itself be a falsehood or at least something not altogether real imposed for a time on the sole true Reality. But here all turns on the mind's conception or the mental being's experience of Reality and how far that conception is valid or how far that experience is imperative, — even if it is a spiritual experience, how far it is absolutely conclusive, solely imperative.

The cosmic Illusion is sometimes envisaged, — though that is not the accepted position, — as something that has the character of an unreal subjective experience; it is then, — or may be, — a figure of forms and movements that arises in some eternal sleep of things or in a dream-consciousness and is temporarily imposed on a pure and featureless self-aware Existence; it is a dream that takes place in the Infinite. In the philosophies of the Mayavadins, — for there are several systems alike in their basis but not altogether and at every point coincident with each other, — the analogy of dream is given, but as an analogy only, not as the intrinsic character of the world-illusion. It is difficult for the positive physical mind to admit the idea that ourselves, the world and life, the sole thing to which our consciousness bears positive witness, are inexistent, a cheat imposed on us by that consciousness: certain analogies are brought forward, the analogies especially of dream and hallucination, in order to show that it is possible for the experiences of the consciousness to seem to it real and yet prove to be without any basis or without a sufficient basis in reality; as a dream is real to the dreamer so long as he sleeps but waking shows it to be unreal, so our experience of world seems to us positive and real but, when we stand back from the illusion, we shall find that it had no reality. But it may be as well to give the dream-analogy its full value and see whether our sense of world-experience has in any way a similar basis. For the idea of the world as a dream, whether it be a dream of the subjective mind or a dream of the soul or a dream in the Eternal, is often entertained and it powerfully enforces the illusionist tendency

in human feeling and thinking. If it has no validity, we must definitely see that and the reasons of its inapplicability and set it aside well out of the way; if it has some validity, we must see what it is and how far it goes. If the world is an illusion, but not a dream-illusion, that distinction too must be put on a secure basis.

Dream is felt to be unreal, first, because it ceases and has no farther validity when we pass from one status of consciousness to another which is our normal status. But this is not by itself a sufficient reason: for it may well be that there are different states of consciousness each with its own realities; if the consciousness of one state of things fades back and its contents are lost or, even when caught in memory, seem to be illusory as soon as we pass into another state, that would be perfectly normal, but it would not prove the reality of the state in which we now are and the unreality of the other which we have left behind us. If earth circumstances begin to seem unreal to a soul passing into a different world or another plane of consciousness, that would not prove their unreality; similarly, the fact that world-existence seems unreal to us when we pass into the spiritual silence or into some Nirvana, does not of itself prove that the cosmos was all the time an illusion. The world is real to the consciousness dwelling in it, an unconditioned existence is real to the consciousness absorbed in Nirvana; that is all that is established. But the second reason for refusing credit to our sleep experience is that a dream is something evanescent without antecedents and without a sequel; ordinarily, too, it is without any sufficient coherence or any significance intelligible to our waking being. If our dreams wore like our waking life an aspect of coherence, each night taking up and carrying farther a past continuous and connected sleep-experience as each day takes up again our waking world-experience, then dreams would assume to our mind quite another character. There is therefore no analogy between a dream and waking life; these are experiences quite different in their character, validity, order. Our life is accused of evanescence and often it is accused too, as a whole, of a lack of inner coherence and significance; but its lack of complete significance may be due

to our lack or limitation of understanding: actually, when we go within and begin to see it from within, it assumes a complete connected significance; at the same time whatever lack of inner coherence was felt before disappears and we see that it was due to the incoherence of our own inner seeing and knowledge and was not at all a character of life. There is no surface incoherence in life, it rather appears to our minds as a chain of firm sequences, and, if that is a mental delusion, as is sometimes alleged, if the sequence is created by our minds and does not actually exist in life, that does not remove the difference of the two states of consciousness. For in dream the coherence given by an observing inner consciousness is absent, and whatever sense of sequence there is seems to be due to a vague and false imitation of the connections of waking life, a subconscious mimesis, but this imitative sequence is shadowy and imperfect, fails and breaks always and is often wholly absent. We see too that the dream-consciousness seems to be wholly devoid of that control which the waking consciousness exercises to a certain extent over life-circumstances; it has the Nature-automatism of a subconscient construction and nothing of the conscious will and organising force of the evolved mind of the human being. Again the evanescence of a dream is radical and one dream has no connection with another; but the evanescence of the waking life is of details, — there is no evidence of evanescence in the connected totality of world-experience. Our bodies perish but souls proceed from birth to birth through the ages: stars and planets may disappear after a lapse of aeons or of many light-cycles, but universe, cosmic existence may well be a permanent as it is certainly a continuous activity; there is nothing to prove that the Infinite Energy which creates it has an end or a beginning either of itself or of its action. So far there is too great a disparateness between dream-life and waking life to make the analogy applicable.

But it may be questioned whether our dreams are indeed totally unreal and without significance, whether they are not a figure, an image-record or a symbolic transcript or representation of things that are real. For that we have to examine, however summarily, the nature of sleep and of dream-phenomena,

their process of origination and their provenance. What happens in sleep is that our consciousness withdraws from the field of its waking experiences; it is supposed to be resting, suspended or in abeyance, but that is a superficial view of the matter. What is in abeyance is the waking activities, what is at rest is the surface mind and the normal conscious action of the bodily part of us; but the inner consciousness is not suspended, it enters into new inner activities, only a part of which, a part happening or recorded in something of us that is near to the surface, we remember. There is maintained in sleep, thus near the surface, an obscure subconscious element which is a receptacle or passage for our dream experiences and itself also a dream-builder; but behind it is the depth and mass of the subliminal, the totality of our concealed inner being and consciousness which is of quite another order. Normally it is a subconscient part in us, intermediate between consciousness and pure inconscience, that sends up through this surface layer its formations in the shape of dreams, constructions marked by an apparent inconsequence and incoherence. Many of these are fugitive structures built upon circumstances of our present life selected apparently at random and surrounded with a phantasy of variation; others call back the past, or rather selected circumstances and persons of the past, as a starting-point for similar fleeting edifices. There are other dreams of the subconscious which seem to be pure phantasy without any such initiation or basis; but the new method of psycho-analysis, trying to look for the first time into our dreams with some kind of scientific understanding, has established in them a system of meanings, a key to things in us which need to be known and handled by the waking consciousness; this of itself changes the whole character and value of our dream-experience. It begins to look as if there were something real behind it and as if too that something were an element of no mean practical importance.

But the subconscious is not our sole dream-builder. The subconscious in us is the extreme border of our secret inner existence where it meets the Inconscient, it is a degree of our being in which the Inconscient struggles into a half conscious-

ness; the surface physical consciousness also, when it sinks back from the waking level and retrogresses towards the Inconscient, retires into this intermediate subconscience. Or, from another viewpoint, this nether part of us may be described as the antechamber of the Inconscient through which its formations rise into our waking or our subliminal being. When we sleep and the surface physical part of us, which is in its first origin here an output from the Inconscient, relapses towards the originating inconscience, it enters into this subconscious element, antechamber or substratum, and there it finds the impressions of its past or persistent habits of mind and experiences, — for all have left their mark on our subconscious part and have there a power of recurrence. In its effect on our waking self this recurrence often takes the form of a reassertion of old habits, impulses dormant or suppressed, rejected elements of the nature, or it comes up as some other not so easily recognisable, some peculiar disguised or subtle result of these suppressed or rejected but not erased impulses or elements. In the dream-consciousness the phenomenon is an apparently fanciful construction, a composite of figures and movements built upon or around the buried impressions with a sense in them that escapes the waking intelligence because it has no clue to the subconscient's system of significances. After a time this subconscious activity appears to sink back into complete inconscience and we speak of this state as deep dreamless sleep; thence we emerge again into the dream-shallows or return to the waking surface.

But, in fact, in what we call dreamless sleep, we have gone into a profounder and denser layer of the subconscient, a state too involved, too immersed or too obscure, dull and heavy to bring to the surface its structures, and we are dreaming there but unable to grasp or retain in the recording layer of subconscience these more obscure dream-figures. Or else, it may be, the part of our mind which still remains active in the sleep of the body has entered into the inner domains of our being, the subliminal mental, the subliminal vital, the subtle-physical, and is there lost to all active connection with the surface parts of us. If we are still in the nearer depths of these regions, the surface subconscient which is our sleep-wakefulness records something of what we

experience in these depths; but it records it in its own transcription, often marred by characteristic incoherences and always, even when most coherent, deformed or cast into figures drawn from the world of waking experience. But if we have gone deeper inward, the record fails or cannot be recovered and we have the illusion of dreamlessness; but the activity of the inner dream consciousness continues behind the veil of the now mute and inactive subconscient surface. This continued dream activity is revealed to us when we become more inwardly conscious, for then we get into connection with the heavier and deeper subconscient stratum and can be aware, — at the time or by a retracing or recovering through memory, — of what happened when we sank into these torpid depths. It is possible too to become conscious deeper within our subliminal selves and we are then aware of experiences on other planes of our being or even in supraphysical worlds to which sleep gives us a right of secret entry. A transcript of such experiences reaches us; but the transcriber here is not the subconscious, it is the subliminal, a greater dream-builder.

If the subliminal thus comes to the front in our dream-consciousness, there is sometimes an activity of our subliminal intelligence, — dream becomes a series of thoughts, often strangely or vividly figured, problems are solved which our waking consciousness could not solve, warnings, premonitions, indications of the future, veridical dreams replace the normal subconscious incoherence. There can come also a structure of symbol-images, some of a mental character, some of a vital nature: the former are precise in their figures, clear in their significance; the latter are often complex and baffling to our waking consciousness, but, if we can seize the clue, they reveal their own sense and peculiar system of coherence. Finally, there can come to us the records of happenings seen or experienced by us on other planes of our own being or of universal being into which we enter: these have sometimes, like the symbolic dreams, a strong bearing on our own inner and outer life or the life of others, reveal elements of our or their mental being and life-being or disclose influences on them of which our waking self is totally ignorant; but sometimes they have no such bearing and are purely

records of other organised systems of consciousness independent of our physical existence. The subconscious dreams constitute the bulk of our most ordinary sleep-experience and they are those which we usually remember; but sometimes the subliminal builder is able to impress our sleep consciousness sufficiently to stamp his activities on our waking memory. If we develop our inner being, live more inwardly than most men do, then the balance is changed and a larger dream-consciousness opens before us; our dreams can take on a subliminal and no longer a subconscious character and can assume a reality and significance.

It is even possible to become wholly conscious in sleep and follow throughout from beginning to end or over large stretches the stages of our dream-experience; it is found that then we are aware of ourselves passing from state after state of consciousness to a brief period of luminous and peaceful dreamless rest, which is the true restorer of the energies of the waking nature, and then returning by the same way to the waking consciousness. It is normal, as we thus pass from state to state, to let the previous experiences slip away from us; in the return only the more vivid or those nearest to the waking surface are remembered: but this can be remedied, — a greater retention is possible or the power can be developed of going back in memory from dream to dream, from state to state, till the whole is once more before us. A coherent knowledge of sleep-life, though difficult to achieve or to keep established, is possible.

Our subliminal self is not, like our surface physical being, an outcome of the energy of the Inconscient; it is a meeting-place of the consciousness that emerges from below by evolution and the consciousness that has descended from above for involution. There is in it an inner mind, an inner vital being of ourselves, an inner or subtle-physical being larger than our outer being and nature. This inner existence is the concealed origin of almost all in our surface self that is not a construction of the first inconscient World-Energy or a natural developed functioning of our surface consciousness or a reaction of it to impacts from the outside universal Nature, — and even in this construction, these functionings, these reactions the subliminal takes part and exercises on them a considerable influence. There is here a

consciousness which has a power of direct contact with the universal unlike the mostly indirect contacts which our surface being maintains with the universe through the sense-mind and the senses. There are here inner senses, a subliminal sight, touch, hearing; but these subtle senses are rather channels of the inner being's direct consciousness of things than its informants: the subliminal is not dependent on its senses for its knowledge, they only give a form to its direct experience of objects; they do not, so much as in waking mind, convey forms of objects for the mind's documentation or as the starting-point or basis for an indirect constructive experience. The subliminal has the right of entry into the mental and vital and subtle-physical planes of the universal consciousness, it is not confined to the material plane and the physical world; it possesses means of communication with the worlds of being which the descent towards involution created in its passage and with all corresponding planes or worlds that may have arisen or been constructed to serve the purpose of the re-ascent from Inconscience to Superconscience. It is into this large realm of interior existence that our mind and vital being retire when they withdraw from the surface activities whether by sleep or inward-drawn concentration or by the inner plunge of trance.

Our waking state is unaware of its connection with the subliminal being, although it receives from it, — but without any knowledge of the place of origin, — the inspirations, intuitions, ideas, will-suggestions, sense-suggestions, urges to action that rise from below or from behind our limited surface existence. Sleep like trance opens the gate of the subliminal to us; for in sleep, as in trance, we retire behind the veil of the limited waking personality and it is behind this veil that the subliminal has its existence. But we receive the records of our sleep experience through dream and in dream figures and not in that condition which might be called an inner waking and which is the most accessible form of the trance state, nor through the supernormal clarities of vision and other more luminous and concrete ways of communication developed by the inner subliminal cognition when it gets into habitual or occasional conscious connection with our waking self. The subliminal, with the subconscious as

an annexe of itself, — for the subconscious is also part of the behind-the-veil entity, — is the seer of inner things and of supra-physical experiences; the surface subconscious is only a transcriber. It is for this reason that the Upanishad describes the subliminal being as the Dream Self because it is normally in dreams, visions, absorbed states of inner experience that we enter into and are part of its experiences, — just as it describes the superconscient as the Sleep Self because normally all mental or sensory experiences cease when we enter this superconscience. For in the deeper trance into which the touch of the superconscient plunges our mentality, no record from it or transcript of its contents can normally reach us; it is only by an especial or an unusual development, in a supernormal condition or through a break or rift in our confined normality, that we can be on the surface conscious of the contacts or messages of the Superconscience. But, in spite of these figurative names of dream-state and sleep-state, the field of both these states of consciousness was clearly regarded as a field of reality no less than that of the waking state in which our movements of perceptive consciousness are a record or transcript of physical things and of our contacts with the physical universe. No doubt, all the three states can be classed as parts of an illusion, our experiences of them can be ranked together as constructions of an illusory consciousness, our waking state no less illusory than our dream state or sleep-state, since the only true truth or real reality is the incommunicable Self or One-Existence (Atman, Adwaita) which is the fourth state of the Self described by the Vedanta. But it is equally possible to regard and rank them together as three different orders of one Reality or as three states of consciousness in which is embodied our contact with three different grades of self-experience and world-experience.

If this is a true account of dream-experience, dreams can no longer be classed as a mere unreal figure of unreal things temporarily imposed upon our half-unconsciousness as a reality; the analogy therefore fails even as an illustrative support for the theory of the cosmic Illusion. It may be said, however, that our dreams are not themselves realities but only a transcript of reality, a system of symbol-images, and our waking experience of the

universe is similarly not a reality but only a transcript of reality, a series of collection of symbol-images. It is quite true that primarily we see the physical universe only through a system of images impressed or imposed on our senses and so far the contention is justified; it may also be admitted that in a certain sense and from one viewpoint our experiences and activities can be considered as symbols of a truth which our lives are trying to express but at present only with a partial success and an imperfect coherence. If that were all, life might be described as a dream-experience of self and things in the consciousness of the Infinite. But although our primary evidence of the objects of the universe consists of a structure of sense-images, these are completed, validated, set in order by an automatic intuition in the consciousness which immediately relates the image with the thing imaged and gets the tangible experience of the object, so that we are not merely regarding or reading a translation or sense-transcript of the reality but looking through the sense-image to the reality. This adequacy is amplified too by the action of a reason which fathoms and understands the law of things sensed and can observe scrupulously the sense-transcript and correct its errors. Therefore we may conclude that we experience a real universe through our imaged sense-transcript by the aid of the intuition and the reason, — an intuition which gives us the touch of things and a reason which investigates their truth by its conceptive knowledge. But we must note also that even if our image view of the universe, our sense-transcript, is a system of symbol-images and not an exact reproduction or transcription, a literal translation, still a symbol is a notation of something that is, a transcript of realities. Even if our images are incorrect, what they endeavour to image are realities, not illusions; when we see a tree or a stone or an animal, it is not a non-existent figure, a hallucination that we are seeing; we may not be sure that the image is exact, we may concede that other-sense might very well see it otherwise, but still there is something there that justifies the image, something with which it has more or less correspondence. But in the theory of Illusion the only reality is an indeterminable featureless pure Existence, Brahman, and there is no possibility of its being translated or mistranslated

into a system of symbol-figures, for that could only be if this Existence had some determinate contents or some unmanifested truths of its being which could be transcribed into the forms or names given to them by our consciousness: a pure Indeterminable cannot be rendered by a transcript, a multitude of representative differentiae, a crowd of symbols or images; for there is in it only a pure Identity, there is nothing to transcribe, nothing to symbolise, nothing to image. Therefore the dream-analogy fails us altogether and is better put out of the way; it can always be used as a vivid metaphor of a certain attitude our mind can take towards its experiences, but it has no value for a metaphysical inquiry into the reality and fundamental significances or the origin of existence.

If we take up the analogy of hallucination, we find it hardly more helpful for a true understanding of the theory of cosmic Illusion than the dream-analogy. Hallucinations are of two kinds, mental or ideative and visual or in some way sensory. When we see an image of things where those things are not, it is an erroneous construction of the senses, a visual hallucination; when we take for an objective fact a thing which is a subjective structure of the mind, a constructive mental error or an objectivised imagination or a misplaced mental image, it is a mental hallucination. An example of the first is the mirage, an example of the second is the classic instance of a rope taken for a snake. In passing we may note that there are many things called hallucinations which are not really that but symbol-images sent up from the subliminal or experiences in which the subliminal consciousness or sense comes to the surface and puts us into contact with supraphysical realities; thus the cosmic consciousness which is our entry by a breaking down of our mental limitations into the sense of a vast reality, has been classed, even in admitting it, as a hallucination. But, taking only the common hallucination, mental or visual, we observe that it seems to be at first sight a true example of what is called imposition in the philosophic theory; it is the placement of an unreal figure of things on a reality, of a mirage upon the bare desert air, of the figure of a non-present snake on the present and real rope. The world, we may contend, is such a hallucination, an imposition of a

non-existent unreal figure of things on the bare ever-present sole reality of the Brahman. But then we note that in each case the hallucination, the false image is not of something quite non-existent; it is an image of something existent and real but not present in the place on which it has been imposed by the mind's error or by a sense-error. A mirage is the image of a city, an oasis, running water or of other absent things, and if these things did not exist, the false image of them, whether raised up by the mind or reflected in the desert air, would not be there to delude the mind with a false sense of reality. A snake exists and its existence and form are known to the victim of the momentary hallucination: if it had not been so, the delusion would not have been created; for it is a form-resemblance of the seen reality to another reality previously known elsewhere that is the origin of the error. The analogy therefore is unhelpful; it would be valid only if our image of the universe were a falsity reflecting a true universe which is not here but elsewhere or else if it were a false imaged manifestation of the Reality replacing in the mind or covering with its distorted resemblance a true manifestation. But here the world is a non-existent form of things, an illusory construction imposed on the bare Reality, on the sole Existent which is for ever empty of things and formless: there would be a true analogy only if our vision constructed in the void air of the desert a figure of things that exist nowhere, or else if it imposed on a bare ground both rope and snake and other figures that equally existed nowhere.

It is clear that in this analogy two quite different kinds of illusion not illustrative of each other are mistakenly put together as if they were identical in nature. All mental or sense-hallucinations are really misrepresentations or misplacements or impossible combinations or false developments of things that are in themselves existent or possible or in some way within or allied to the province of the real. All mental errors and illusions are the result of an ignorance which miscombines its data or proceeds falsely upon a previous or present or possible content of knowledge. But the cosmic Illusion has no basis of actuality, it is an original and all-originating illusion; it imposes names, figures, happenings that are pure inventions on a Reality in which there

never were and never will be any happenings, names or figures. The analogy of mental hallucination would only be applicable if we admit a Brahman without names, forms or relations and a world of names, forms and relations as equal realities imposed one upon the other, the rope in the place of the snake, or the snake in the place of the rope, — an attribution, it might be, of the activities of the Saguna to the quiescence of the Nirguna. But if both are real, both must be either separate aspects of the Reality or co-ordinate aspects, positive and negative poles of the one Existence. Any error or confusion of Mind between them would not be a creative cosmic Illusion, but only a wrong perception of realities, a wrong relation created by the Ignorance.

If we scrutinise other illustrations or analogies that are offered to us for a better understanding of the operation of Maya, we detect in all of them an inapplicability that deprives them of their force and value. The familiar instance of mother-of-pearl and silver turns also, like the rope and snake analogy, upon an error due to a resemblance between a present real and another and absent real; it can have no application to the imposition of a multiple and mutable unreality upon a sole and unique immutable Real. In the example of an optical illusion duplicating or multiplying a single object, as when we see two moons instead of one, there are two or more identical forms of the one object, one real, one — or the rest — an illusion: this does not illustrate the juxtaposition of world and Brahman; for in the operation of Maya there is a much more complex phenomenon, — there is indeed an illusory multiplication of the Identical imposed upon its one and ever-unalterable Identity, the One appearing as many, but upon that is imposed an immense organised diversity in nature, a diversity of forms and movements which have nothing to do with the original Real. Dreams, visions, the imagination of the artist or poet can present such an organised diversity which is not real; but it is an imitation, a mimesis of a real and already existent organised diversity, or it starts from such a mimesis and even in the richest variation or wildest invention some mimetic element is observable. There is here no such thing as the operation attributed to Maya in which there is no mimesis but a pure and radically original creation of unreal forms and movements

that are non-existent anywhere and neither imitate nor reflect nor alter and develop anything discoverable in the Reality. There is nothing in the operations of Mind-illusion that throws light upon this mystery; it is, as a stupendous cosmic Illusion of this kind must be, *sui generis*, without parallel. What we see in the universe is that a diversity of the identical is everywhere the fundamental operation of cosmic Nature; but here it presents itself, not as an illusion, but as a various real formation out of a one original substance. A Reality of Oneness manifesting itself in a reality of numberless forms and powers of its being is what we confront everywhere. There is no doubt in its process a mystery, even a magic, but there is nothing to show that it is a magic of the unreal and not a working of a Consciousness and Force of being of the omnipotent Real, a self-creation operated by an eternal self-knowledge.

This at once raises the question of the nature of Mind, the parent of these illusions, and its relation to the original Existence. Is mind the child and instrument of an original Illusion, or is it itself a primal miscreating Force or Consciousness? or is the mental ignorance a misprision of the truths of Existence, a deviation from an original Truth-Consciousness which is the real world-builder? Our own mind, at any rate, is not an original and primary creative power of Consciousness; it is, and all mind of the same character must be, derivative, an instrumental demiurge, an intermediary creator. It is likely then that analogies from the errors of mind, which are the outcome of an intermediate Ignorance, may not truly illustrate the nature or action of an original creative Illusion, an all-inventing and all-constructing Maya. Our mind stands between a superconscience and an inconscience and receives from both these opposite powers: it stands between an occult subliminal existence and an outward cosmic phenomenon; it receives inspirations, intuitions, imaginations, impulsions to knowledge and action, figures of subjective realities or possibilities from the unknown inner source; it receives the figures of realised actualities and their suggestions of further possibility from the observed cosmic phenomenon. What it receives are truths essential, possible or actual; it starts from the realised actualities of the physical universe and it brings out

from them in its subjective action the unrealised possibilities which they contain or suggest or to which it can arrive by proceeding from them as a starting-point: it selects some out of these possibilities for a subjective action and plays with imagined or inwardly constructed forms of them; it chooses others for objectivisation and attempts to realise them. But it receives inspirations also from above and within, from invisible sources and not only from the impacts of the visible cosmic phenomenon; it sees truths other than those suggested by the actual physicality around it, and here too it plays subjectively with transmitted or constructed forms of these truths or it selects for objectivisation, attempts to realise.

Our mind is an observer and user of actualities, a diviner or recipient of truths not yet known or actualised, a dealer in possibilities that mediate between the truth and actuality. But it has not the omniscience of an infinite Consciousness; it is limited in knowledge and has to supplement its restricted knowledge by imagination and discovery. It does not, like the infinite Consciousness, manifest the known, it has to discover the unknown; it seizes the possibilities of the Infinite, not as results or variations of forms of a latent Truth, but as constructions or creations, figments of its own boundless imagination. It has not the omnipotence of an infinite conscious Energy; it can only realise or actualise what the cosmic Energy will accept from it or what it has the strength to impose or introduce into the sum of things because the secret Divinity, superconscient or subliminal, which uses it intends that that should be expressed in Nature. Its limitation of Knowledge constitutes by incompleteness, but also by openness to error, an Ignorance. In dealing with actualities it may misobserve, misuse, miscreate; in dealing with possibilities it may miscompose, miscombine, misapply, misplace; in its dealings with truths revealed to it it may deform, misrepresent, disharmonise. It may also make constructions of its own which have no correspondence with the things of actual existence, no potentiality of realisation, no support from the truth behind them; but still these constructions start from an illegitimate extension of actualities, catch at unpermitted possibilities, or turn truths to an application which is not applicable. Mind creates,

but it is not an original creator, not omniscient or omnipotent, not even an always efficient demiurge. Maya, the Illusive Power, on the contrary, must be an original creator, for it creates all things out of nothing unless we suppose that it creates out of the substance of the Reality, but then the things it creates must be in some way real; it has a perfect knowledge of what it wishes to create, a perfect power to create whatever it chooses, omniscient and omnipotent though only over its own illusions, harmonising them and linking them together with a magical sureness and sovereign energy, absolutely effective in imposing its own formations or figments passed off as truths, possibilities, actualities on the creature intelligence.

Our mind works best and with a firm confidence when it is given a substance to work on or at least to use as a basis for its operations, or when it can handle a cosmic force of which it has acquired the knowledge, — it is sure of its steps when it has to deal with actualities; this rule of dealing with objectivised or discovered actualities and proceeding from them for creation is the reason of the enormous success of physical Science. But here there is evidently no creation of illusions, no creation of non-existence *in vacuo* and turning them into apparent actualities such as is attributed to the cosmic Illusion. For Mind can only create out of substance what is possible to the substance, it can only do with the force of Nature what is in accordance with her realisable energies; it can only invent or discover what is already contained in the truth and potentiality of Nature. On the other side, it receives inspirations for creation from within itself or from above: but these can only take form if they are truths or potentials, not by the mind's own right of invention; for if the mind erects what is neither true nor potential, that cannot be created, cannot become actual in Nature. Maya, on the contrary, if it creates on the basis of the Reality, yet erects a superstructure which has nothing to do with the Reality, is not true or potential in it; if it creates out of the substance of the Reality, it makes out of it things that are not possible to it or in accordance with it, — for it creates forms and the Reality is supposed to be a Formless incapable of form, it creates determinations and the Reality is supposed to be absolutely indeterminable.

But our mind has the faculty of imagination; it can create and take as true and real its own mental structures: here, it might be thought, is something analogous to the action of Maya. Our mental imagination is an instrument of Ignorance; it is the resort or device or refuge of a limited capacity of knowledge, a limited capacity of effective action. Mind supplements these deficiencies by its power of imagination: it uses it to extract from things obvious and visible the things that are not obvious and visible; it undertakes to create its own figures of the possible and the impossible; it erects illusory actuals or draws figures of a conjectured or constructed truth of things that are not true to outer experience. That is at least the appearance of its operation; but, in reality, it is the mind's way or one of its ways of summoning out of Being its infinite possibilities, even of discovering or capturing the unknown possibilities of the Infinite. But, because it cannot do this with knowledge, it makes experimental constructions of truth and possibility and a yet unrealised actuality: as its power of receiving inspirations of Truth is limited, it imagines, hypothetises, questions whether this or that may not be truths; as its force to summon real potentials is narrow and restricted, it erects possibilities which it hopes to actualise or wishes it could actualise; as its power to actualise is cramped and confined by the material world's oppositions, it figures subjective actualisations to satisfy its will of creation and delight of self-presentation. But it is to be noted that through the imagination it does receive a figure of truth, does summon possibilities which are afterwards realised, does often by its imagination exercise an effective pressure on the world's actualities. Imaginations that persist in the human mind, like the idea of travel in the air, end often by self-fulfilment; individual thought-formations can actualise themselves if there is sufficient strength in the formation or in the mind that forms it. Imaginations can create their own potentiality, especially if they are supported in the collective mind, and may in the long run draw on themselves the sanction of the cosmic Will. In fact all imaginations represent possibilities: some are able one day to actualise in some form, perhaps a very different form of actuality; more are condemned to sterility because they do not enter into the

figure or scheme of the present creation, do not come within the permitted potentiality of the individual or do not accord with the collective or the generic principle or are alien to the nature or destiny of the containing world-existence.

Thus the mind's imaginations are not purely and radically illusory: they proceed on the basis of its experience of actualities or at least set out from that, are variations upon actuality, or they figure the "may-be"s or "might-be"s of the Infinite, what could be if other truths had manifested, if existing potentials had been otherwise arranged or other possibilities than those already admitted became potential. Moreover, through this faculty forms and powers of other domains than that of the physical actuality communicate with our mental being. Even when the imaginations are extravagant or take the form of hallucinations or illusions, they proceed with actuals or possibles for their basis. The mind creates the figure of a mermaid, but the phantasy is composed of two actualities put together in a way that is outside the earth's normal potentiality; angels, griffins, chimeras are constructed on the same principle: sometimes the imagination is a memory of former actualities as in the mythical figure of the dragon, sometimes it is a figure or a happening that is real or could be real on other planes or in other conditions of existence. Even the illusions of the maniac are founded on an extravagant misfitting of actuals, as when the lunatic combines himself, kingship and England and sits in imagination on the throne of the Plantagenets and Tudors. Again, when we look into the origin of mental error, we find normally that it is a miscombination, misplacement, misuse, misunderstanding or misapplication of elements of experience and knowledge. Imagination itself is in its nature a substitute for a truer consciousness's faculty of intuition of possibility: as the mind ascends towards the Truth-Consciousness, this mental power becomes a truth-imagination which brings the colour and light of the higher truth into the limited adequacy or inadequacy of the knowledge already achieved and formulated and, finally, in the transforming light above it gives place wholly to higher truth-powers or itself turns into intuition and inspiration; the Mind in that uplifting ceases to be a creator of delusions and an architect of error. Mind then

is not a sovereign creator of things non-existent or erected in a void: it is an ignorance trying to know; its very illusions start from a basis of some kind and are the results of a limited knowledge or a half-ignorance. Mind is an instrument of the cosmic Ignorance, but it does not seem to be or does not act like a power or an instrument of a cosmic Illusion. It is a seeker and discoverer or a creator or would-be creator of truths, possibilities and actualities, and it would be rational to suppose that the original Consciousness and Power, from which mind must be a derivation, is also a creator of truths, possibilities and actualities, not limited like mind but cosmic in its scope, not open to error, because free from all ignorance, a sovereign instrument or a self-power of a supreme Omniscience and Omnipotence, an eternal Wisdom and Knowledge.

This then is the dual possibility that arises before us. There is, we may suppose, an original consciousness and power creative of illusions and unrealities with mind as its instrument or medium in the human and animal consciousness, so that the differentiated universe we see is unreal, a fiction of Maya, and only some indeterminable and undifferentiated Absolute is real. Or there is, we may equally suppose, an original, a supreme or cosmic Truth-Consciousness creative of a true universe, but with mind acting in that universe as an imperfect consciousness, ignorant, partly knowing, partly not knowing, — a consciousness which is by its ignorance or limitation of knowledge capable of error, mispresentation, mistaken or misdirected development from the known, of uncertain gropings towards the unknown, of partial creations and buildings, a constant half-position between truth and error, knowledge and nescience. But this ignorance in fact proceeds, however stumblingly, upon knowledge and towards knowledge; it is inherently capable of shedding the limitation, the mixture, and can turn by that liberation into the Truth-Consciousness, into a power of the original Knowledge. Our inquiry has so far led rather in the second direction; it points towards the conclusion that the nature of our consciousness is not of a character that would justify the hypothesis of a Cosmic Illusion as the solution of its problem. A problem exists, but it consists in the mixture of Knowledge with Ignorance

in our cognition of self and things, and it is the origin of this imperfection that we have to discover. There is no need of bringing in an original power of Illusion always mysteriously existent in the eternal Reality or else intervening and imposing a world of non-existent forms on a Consciousness or Superconscience that is for ever pure, eternal and absolute.

CHAPTER VI

Reality and the Cosmic Illusion

The Eternal is true; the world is a lie.

Vivekachudamani.[1]

The Master of Maya creates this world by his Maya and within it is confined another; one should know his Maya as Nature and the Master of Maya as the great Lord of all.

Swetaswatara Upanishad.[2]

The Purusha is all this that is, what has been and what is yet to be; he is the master of Immortality and he is whatever grows by food.

Rig Veda.[3]
Swetaswatara Upanishad.[4]

All is the Divine Being.

Gita.[5]

BUT so far we have only cleared a part of the foreground of the field of inquiry; in the background the problem remains unsolved and entire. It is the problem of the nature of the original Consciousness or Power that has created or conceptively constructed or manifested the universe, and the relation to it of our world-cognition, — in sum, whether the universe is a figment of consciousness imposed on our mind by a supreme force of Illusion or a true formation of being experienced by us with a still ignorant but an increasing knowledge. And the true question is not of Mind alone or of a cosmic dream or a cosmic hallucination born of Mind, but of the nature of the Reality, the validity of the creative action that takes place in it or is imposed upon it, the presence or absence of a real content in its or our consciousness and its or our regard on the universe. On behalf of Illusionism it can be answered to the position put forward by us with regard to the truth of existence that all this might be valid within the bounds of the cosmic Illusion; it is the system, the pragmatic machinery by which Maya works and maintains herself in the Ignorance: but the truths, possibilities, actualities of the cosmic system are true and actual only within the Illusion,

[1] Verse 20. [2] IV. 9, 10. [3] X. 90. 2. [4] III. 15. [5] VII. 19.

outside that magic circle they have no validity; they are not abiding and eternal realities; all are temporary figures, the works of Knowledge no less than the works of Ignorance. It can be conceded that knowledge is a useful instrument of the Illusion of Maya, for escaping from herself, for destroying herself in the Mind; spiritual knowledge is indispensable: but the one true truth, the only abiding reality beyond all duality of knowledge and ignorance is the eternal relationless Absolute or the Self, the eternal pure Existence. All here turns on the mind's conception and the mental being's experience of reality; for according to the mind's experience or conception of reality will be its interpretation of data otherwise identical, the facts of the Cosmos, individual experience, the realisation of the supreme Transcendence. All mental cognition depends on three elements, the percipient, the perception and the thing perceived or percept. All or any of these three can be affirmed or denied reality; the question then is which of these, if any, are real and to what extent or in what manner. If all three are rejected as instruments of a cosmic Illusion, the farther and consequent question arises: is there then a reality outside them and, if so, what is the relation between the Reality and the Illusion?

It is possible to affirm the reality of the percept, of the objective universe, and deny or diminish the reality of the percipient individual and his perceptive consciousness. In the theory of the sole reality of Matter, consciousness is only an operation of Matter-energy in Matter, a secretion or vibration of the brain-cells, a physical reception of images and a brain-response, a reflex action or a reaction of Matter to the contacts of Matter. Even if the rigidity of this affirmation is relaxed and consciousness otherwise accounted for, still it is no more than a temporary and derivative phenomenon, not the enduring Reality. The percipient individual is himself only a body and brain capable of the mechanical reactions we generalise under the name of consciousness: the individual has only a relative value and a temporary reality. But if Matter turns out to be itself unreal or derivative and simply a phenomenon of Energy, as seems now to be the probability, then Energy remains as the sole Reality; the percipient, his perception, the perceived

object are only phenomena of Energy. But an Energy without a Being or Existence possessing it or a Consciousness supplying it, an Energy working originally in the void, — for the material field in which we see it at work is itself a creation, — looks itself very much like a mental construction, an unreality: or it might be a temporary inexplicable outbreak of motion which might cease at any time to create phenomena; the Void of the Infinite alone would be enduring and real. The Buddhist theory of the percipient and the perception and the percept as a construction of Karma, the process of some cosmic fact of Action, gave room to such a conclusion; for it led logically to the affirmation of the Non-Being, Void or Nihil. It is possible indeed that what is at work is not an Energy, but a Consciousness; as Matter reduces itself to Energy seizable by us not in itself but in its results and workings, so Energy could be reduced to action of a Consciousness seizable by us not in itself but in its results and workings. But if this Consciousness is supposed to work similarly in a Void, we are exposed to the same conclusion, that it is a creator of temporary phenomenal illusions and itself illusory; Void, an infinite Zero, an original Non-Existence is alone the enduring Reality. But these conclusions are not binding; for behind this Consciousness seizable in its works only there may be an invisible original Existence: a Conscious-Energy of that Existence could then be a reality; its creations too, made out of an infinitesimal substance of being impalpable to the senses but revealed to them at a certain stage of the action of Energy as Matter, would be real, as also the individual emerging as a conscious being of the original Existence in a world of Matter. This original Reality might be a cosmic spiritual Existence, a Pantheos, or it might have some other status; but in any case there would be, not a universal illusion or mere phenomenon, but a true universe.

In the classical theory of Illusionism a sole and supreme spiritual Existence is accepted as the one Reality: it is by its essentiality the Self, yet the natural beings of which it is the Self are only temporary appearances; it is in its absoluteness the substratum of all things, but the universe erected on the substratum is either a non-existence, a semblance, or else in

some way unreally real; it is a cosmic illusion. For the Reality is one without a second, it is immutable in eternity, it is the sole Existence; there is nothing else, there are no true becomings of this Being: it is and must for ever remain void of name, feature, formation, relation, happening; if it has a Consciousness, it can only be a pure consciousness of its own absolute being. But what then is the relation between the Reality and the Illusion? By what miracle or mystery does the Illusion come to be or how does it manage to appear or to abide in Time for ever?

As only Brahman is real, only a consciousness or a power of Brahman could be a real creator and a creator of realities. But since there can be no other reality than Brahman pure and absolute, there can be no true creative power of Brahman. A Brahman-consciousness aware of real beings, forms and happenings would signify a truth of the Becoming, a spiritual and material reality of the universe, which the experience of the supreme Truth negates and nullifies and with which its sole existence is logically incompatible. Maya's creation is a presentation of beings, names, forms, happenings, things, impossible to accept as true, contradictory of the indeterminable purity of the One Existence. Maya then is not real, it is non-existent: Maya is itself an illusion, the parent of numberless illusions. But still this illusion and its works have some kind of existence and so must in some way be real: moreover, the universe does not exist in a Void but stands because it is imposed on Brahman, it is based in a way on the one Reality; we ourselves in the Illusion attribute its forms, names, relations, happenings to the Brahman, become aware of all things as the Brahman, see the Reality through these unrealities. There is then a reality in Maya; it is at the same time real and unreal, existent and non-existent; or, let us say, it is neither real nor unreal: it is a paradox, a suprarational enigma. But what then is this mystery, or is it insoluble? how comes this illusion to intervene in Brahman-existence? what is the nature of this unreal reality of Maya?

At first sight one is compelled to suppose that Brahman must be in some way the percipient of Maya, — for Brahman

is the sole Reality, and if he is not the percipient, who then perceives the Illusion? Any other percipient is not in existence; the individual who is in us the apparent witness is himself phenomenal and unreal, a creation of Maya. But if Brahman is the percipient, how is it possible that the illusion can persist for a moment, since the true consciousness of the percipient is consciousness of self, an awareness solely of its own pure self-existence? If Brahman perceives the world and things with a true consciousness, then they must all be itself and real; but since they are not the pure self-existence, but at best are forms of it and are seen through a phenomenal Ignorance, this realistic solution is not possible. Yet we have to accept, provisionally at least, the universe as a fact, an impossibility as a thing that is, since Maya is there and her works persist and obsess the spirit with the sense, however false, of their reality. It is on this basis that we have, then, to face and solve the dilemma.

If Maya is in some way real, the conclusion imposes itself that Brahman the Reality is in that way the percipient of Maya. Maya may be his power of differentiating perception, for the power of Maya consciousness which distinguishes it from the true consciousness of sole spiritual Self is its creative perception of difference. Or Maya must be at least, if this creation of difference is considered to be only a result and not the essence of Maya-force, some power of Brahman's consciousness, — for it is only a consciousness that can see or create an illusion and there cannot be another original or originating consciousness than that of Brahman. But since Brahman is also self-aware for ever, there must be a double status of Brahman-Consciousness, one conscious of the sole Reality, the other conscious of the unrealities to which by its creative perception of them it gives some kind of apparent existence. These unrealities cannot be made of the substance of the Reality, for then they also must be real. In this view one cannot accept the assertion of the Upanishads that the world is made out of the supreme Existence, is a becoming, an outcome or product of the eternal Being. Brahman is not the material cause of the universe: our nature, — as opposed to our self, — is not made of its spiritual substance; it is constructed out of the unreal reality of Maya. But, on the

contrary, our spiritual being is of that substance, is indeed the Brahman; Brahman is above Maya, but he is also the percipient of his creations both from above and from within Maya. This dual consciousness offers itself as the sole plausible explanation of the riddle of a real eternal Percipient, an unreal Percept, and a Perception that is a half-real creator of unreal percepts.

If there is not this dual consciousness, if Maya is the sole conscious power of Brahman, then one of two things must be true: either the reality of Maya as a power is that it is a subjective action of Brahman-consciousness emerging out of its silence and superconscient immobility and passing through experiences that are real because they are part of the consciousness of Brahman but unreal because they are not part of its being, or else Maya is Brahman's power of cosmic Imagination inherent in his eternal being creating out of nothing names, forms and happenings that are not in any way real. In that case Maya would be real, but her works entirely fictitious, pure imaginations: but can we affirm Imagination as the sole dynamic or creative power of the Eternal? Imagination is a necessity for a partial being with an ignorant consciousness; for it has to supplement its ignorance by imaginations and conjectures: there can be no place for such a movement in the sole consciousness of a sole Reality which has no reason to construct unrealities, for it is ever pure and self-complete. It is difficult to see what in its own being could impel or induce such a Sole Existence complete in its very essence, blissful in its eternity, containing nothing to be manifested, timelessly perfect, to create an unreal Time and Space and people it to all eternity with an interminable cosmic show of false images and happenings. This solution is logically untenable.

The other solution, the idea of a purely subjective unreal reality, starts from the distinction made by the mind in physical Nature between its subjective and objective experiences; for it is the objective alone of which it is sure as entirely and solidly real. But such a distinction could hardly exist in Brahman-consciousness since here there is either no subject and no object or Brahman itself is the sole possible subject of its conscious-

ness and the sole possible object; there could be nothing externally objective to Brahman, since there is nothing else than Brahman. This idea, then, of a subjective action of consciousness creating a world of fictions other than or distorting the sole true object looks like an imposition on the Brahman by our mind; it imposes on the pure and perfect Reality a feature of its own imperfection, not truly attributable to the perception of a Supreme Being. On the other hand, the distinction between the consciousness and the being of Brahman could not be valid, unless Brahman-being and Brahman-consciousness are two distinct entities, — the consciousness imposing its experiences on the pure existence of the being but unable to touch or affect or penetrate it. Brahman, then, whether as the supreme sole Self-Existence or the Self of the real-unreal individual in Maya, would be aware by his true consciousness of the illusions imposed on him and would know them as illusions; only some energy of Maya-nature or something in it would be deluded by its own inventions, — or else, not being really deluded, still persist in behaving and feeling as if it were deluded. This duality is what happens to our consciousness in the Ignorance when it separates itself from the works of Nature and is aware within of the Self as the sole truth and the rest as not-self and not-real, but has on the surface to act as if the rest too were real. But this solution negates the sole and indivisible pure existence and pure awareness of the Brahman; it creates a dualism within its featureless unity which is not other in its purport than the dualism of the double Principle in the Sankhya view of things, Purusha and Prakriti, Soul and Nature. These solutions then must be put aside as untenable, unless we modify our first view of the Reality and concede to it a power of manifold status of consciousness or a power of manifold status of existence.

But, again, the dual consciousness, if we admit it, cannot be explained as a dual power of Knowledge-Ignorance valid for the Supreme Existence as it is for us in the universe. For we cannot suppose that Brahman is at all subject to Maya, since that would mean a principle of Ignorance clouding the Eternal's self-awareness; it would be to impose the limitations of our own consciousness on the eternal Reality. An Ignorance

which occurs or intervenes in the course of manifestation as a result of a subordinate action of Consciousness and as part of a divine cosmic plan and its evolutionary meaning, is one thing and is logically conceivable; a meaningless ignorance or illusion eternal in the original consciousness of the Reality is another thing and not easily conceivable; it appears as a violent mental construction which has no likelihood of validity in the truth of the Absolute. The dual consciousness of Brahman must be in no way an ignorance, but a self-awareness co-existent with a voluntary will to erect a universe of illusions which are held in a frontal perception aware at once of self and the illusory world, so that there is no delusion, no feeling of its reality. The delusion takes place only in the illusory world itself, and the Self or Brahman in the world either enjoys with a free participation or witnesses, itself separate and intangible, the play which lays its magical spell only upon the Nature-mind created for her action by Maya. But this would seem to signify that the Eternal, not content with its pure absolute existence, has the need to create, to occupy itself throughout Time with a drama of names and forms and happenings; it needs, being sole, to see itself as many, being peace and bliss and self-knowledge to observe an experience or representation of mingled knowledge and ignorance, delight and suffering, unreal existence and escape from unreal existence. For the escape is for the individual being constructed by Maya; the Eternal does not need to escape and the play continues its cycle for ever. Or if not the need, there is the will to so create, or there is the urge or the automatic action of these contraries: but, if we consider the sole eternity of pure existence attributed to the Reality, all alike, need, will, urge or automatism, are equally impossible and incomprehensible. This is an explanation of a sort, but it is an explanation which leaves the mystery still beyond logic or comprehension; for this dynamic consciousness of the Eternal is a direct contradiction of its static and real nature. A Will or Power to create or manifest is undoubtedly there: but, if it is a will or power of the Brahman, it can only be for a creation of realities of the Real or a manifestation of the timeless process of its being in Time-eternity; for it seems incredible that the sole power of the Reality should

be to manifest something contrary to itself or to create non-existent things in an illusory universe.

There is so far no satisfying answer to the riddle: but it may be that we err in attributing any kind of reality, however illusory at bottom, to Maya or her works: the true solution lies in facing courageously the mystery of its and their utter unreality. This absolute unreality seems to be envisaged by certain formulations of Illusionism or by certain arguments put forward in its favour. This side then of the problem has to pass under consideration before we can examine with confidence the solutions that rest on a relative or partial reality of the universe. There is indeed a line of reasoning which gets rid of the problem by excluding it; it affirms that the question how the Illusion generated, how the universe manages to be there in the pure existence of Brahman, is illegitimate: the problem does not exist, because the universe is non-existent, Maya is unreal, Brahman is the sole truth, alone and self-existent for ever. Brahman is not affected by any illusory consciousness, no universe has come into existence within its timeless reality. But this evasion of the difficulty is either a sophism which means nothing, an acrobacy of verbal logic, the logical reason hiding its head in the play of words and ideas and refusing to see or to solve a real and baffling difficulty, or else it means too much, since in effect it gets rid of all relation of Maya to Brahman by affirming her as an independent absolute non-reality along with the universe created by her. If a real universe does not exist, a cosmic Illusion exists and we are bound to inquire how it came into being or how it manages to exist, what is its relation or non-relation to the Reality, what is meant by our own existence in Maya, by our subjugation to her cycles, by our liberation from her. For in this view we have to suppose that Brahman is not the percipient of Maya or her works, Maya herself is not a power of Brahman-consciousness: Brahman is superconscient, immersed in its own pure being or is conscious only of its own absoluteness; it has nothing to do with Maya. But in that case either Maya cannot exist even as an illusion or there would be a dual Entity or two entities, a real Eternal superconscious or conscious only of itself and an illusive Power that creates and is conscious of a false universe. We are back on the horns of the

dilemma and with no prospect of getting free from our impalement on it, unless we escape by concluding that since all philosophy is part of Maya, all philosophy is also an illusion, problems abound but no conclusion is possible. For what we are confronted with is a pure static and immutable Reality and an illusory dynamism, the two absolutely contradictory of each other, with no greater Truth beyond them in which their secret can be found and their contradictions discover a reconciling issue.

If Brahman is not the percipient, then the percipient must be the individual being: but this percipient is created by the Illusion and unreal; the percept, the world, is an illusion created by an Illusion and unreal; the perceiving consciousness is itself an illusion and therefore unreal. But this deprives everything of significance, our spiritual existence and our salvation from Maya no less than our temporal existence and our immersion in Maya; all are of an equal unreality and unimportance. It is possible to take a less rigid standpoint and hold that Brahman as Brahman has nothing to do with Maya, is eternally free from all illusion or any commerce with illusion, but Brahman as the individual percipient or as the Self of all being here has entered into Maya and can in the individual withdraw from it, and this withdrawal is for the individual an act of supreme importance. But here a dual being is imposed on Brahman and a reality attributed to something that belongs to the cosmic Illusion, — to the individual being of Brahman in Maya, for Brahman as the Self of all is not even phenomenally bound and does not need to escape from her: moreover, salvation cannot be of importance if bondage is unreal and bondage cannot be real unless Maya and her world are real. The absolute unreality of Maya disappears and gives place to a very comprehensive even if perhaps only a practical and temporal reality. To avoid this conclusion it may be said that our individuality is unreal, it is Brahman who withdraws from a reflection of itself in the figment of individuality and its extinction is our release, our salvation: but Brahman, always free, cannot suffer by bondage or profit by salvation, and a reflection, a figment of individuality is not a thing that can need salvation. A reflection, a figment, a mere image in the deceptive mirror of Maya cannot suffer a real bondage or profit by a real salvation.

If it be said that it is a conscious reflection or figment and therefore can really suffer and enter into the bliss of release, the question arises whose is the consciousness that so suffers in this fictitious existence,—for there can be no real consciousness except that of the One Existence; so that once more there is established a dual consciousness for Brahman, a consciousness or superconscience free from the illusion and a consciousness subject to the illusion, and we have again substantiated a certain reality of our existence and experience in Maya. For if our being is that of the Brahman, our consciousness something of the consciousness of the Brahman, with whatever qualification, it is to that extent real,—and if our being, why not the being of the universe?

It may finally be put forward as a solution that the percipient individual and the percept universe are unreal, but Maya by imposing itself on Brahman acquires a certain reality, and that reality lends itself to the individual and to its experience in the cosmic Illusion which endures so long as it is subject to the illusion. But, again, for whom is the experience valid, the reality acquired while it endures, and for whom does it cease by liberation, extinction or withdrawal? For an illusory unreal being cannot put on reality and suffer from a real bondage or escape from it by a real act of evasion or self-extinction; it can only seem to some real self or being to exist, but in that case this real self must in some way or in some degree have become subject to Maya. It must either be the consciousness of Brahman that projects itself into a world of Maya and issues from Maya or it must be the being of Brahman that puts forth something of itself, its reality, into Maya and withdraws it again from Maya. Or what again is this Maya that imposes itself on Brahman? from where does it come if it is not already in Brahman, an action of the eternal Consciousness or the eternal Superconscience? It is only if a being or a consciousness of the Reality undergoes the consequences of the Illusion that the cycles of the Illusion can put on any reality or have any importance except as a dance of phantasmagoric marionettes with which the Eternal amuses himself, a puppet-show in Time. We are driven back to the dual being of Brahman, the dual consciousness of Brahman involved in the Illusion and free from the Illusion, and a certain phenomenal

truth of being for Maya: there can be no solution of our existence in the universe if that existence and the universe itself have no reality, — even though the reality be only partial, restricted, derivative. But what can be the reality of an original universal and fundamentally baseless Illusion? The only possible answer is that it is a suprarational mystery, inexplicable and ineffable, — *anirvacanīya.*

There are, however, two possible replies to the difficulty, if we get rid of the idea of absolute unreality and admit a qualification or compromise. A basis can be created for a subjective illusion-consciousness which is yet part of Being, if we accept in the sense of an illusory subjective world-awareness the account of sleep and dream creation given to us in the Upanishads. For the affirmation there is that Brahman as Self is fourfold; the Self is Brahman and all that is is the Brahman, but all that is is the Self seen by the Self in four states of its being. In the pure self-status neither consciousness nor unconsciousness as we conceive it can be affirmed about Brahman; it is a state of superconscience absorbed in its self-existence, in a self-silence or a self-ecstasy, or else it is the status of a free Superconscient containing or basing everything but involved in nothing. But there is also a luminous status of sleep-self, a massed consciousness which is the origin of cosmic existence; this state of deep sleep in which yet there is the presence of an omnipotent Intelligence is the seed state or causal condition from which emerges the cosmos; — this and the dream-self which is the continent of all subtle, subjective or supraphysical experience, and the self of waking which is the support of all physical experience, can be taken as the whole field of Maya. As a man in deep sleep passes into dreams in which he experiences self-constructed unstable structures of name, form, relation, happenings, and in the waking state externalises himself in the more apparently stable but yet transient structures of the physical consciousness, so the Self develops out of a state of massed consciousness its subjective and its objective cosmic experience. But the waking state is not a true waking from this original and causal sleep; it is only a full emergence into a gross external and objective sense of the positive reality of objects of consciousness as opposed to the subtle subjective dream-awareness of those

objects: the true waking is a withdrawal from both objective and subjective consciousness and from the massed causal Intelligence into the superconscience superior to all consciousness; for all consciousness and all unconsciousness is Maya. Here, we may say, Maya is real because it is the self's experience of the Self, something of the Self enters into it, is affected by its happenings because it accepts them, believes in them, they are to it real experiences, creations out of its conscious being; but it is unreal because it is a sleep state, a dream state, an eventually transient waking state, not the true status of the superconscient Reality. Here there is no actual dichotomy of being itself, but there is a multiplicity of status of the one Being; there is no original dual consciousness implying a Will in the Uncreated to create illusory things out of non-existence, but there is One Being in states of superconscience and consciousness each with its own nature of self-experience. But the lower states, although they have a reality, are yet qualified by a building and seeing of subjective self-constructions which are not the Real. The One Self sees itself as many, but this multiple existence is subjective; it has a multiplicity of its states of consciousness, but this multiplicity also is subjective; there is a reality of subjective experience of a real Being, but no objective universe.

It may be noted, however, that nowhere in the Upanishads is it actually laid down that the threefold status is a condition of illusion or the creation of an unreality; it is constantly affirmed that all this that is, — this universe we are now supposing to have been constructed by Maya, — is the Brahman, the Reality. The Brahman becomes all these beings; all beings must be seen in the Self, the Reality, and the Reality must be seen in them, the Reality must be seen as being actually all these beings; for not only the Self is Brahman, but all is the Self, all this that is is the Brahman, the Reality. That emphatic asseveration leaves no room for an illusory Maya; but still the insistent denial that there is anything other than or separate from the experiencing self, certain phrases used and the description of two of the states of consciousness as sleep and dream may be taken as if they annulled the emphasis on the universal Reality; these passages open the gates to the illusionist idea and have been made the

foundation for an uncompromising system of that nature. If we take this fourfold status as a figure of the Self passing from its superconscient state, where there is no subject or object, into a luminous trance in which superconscience becomes a massed consciousness out of which the subjective status of being and the objective come into emergence, then we get according to our view of things either a possible process of illusionary creation or a process of creative Self-knowledge and All-knowledge.

In fact, if we can judge from the description of the three lower states of Self as the all-wise Intelligence,[1] the Seer of the subtle and the Seer of the gross material existence, this sleep state and this dream state seem to be figurative names for the superconscient and the subliminal which are behind and beyond our waking status; they are so named and figured because it is through dream and sleep, — or trance which can be regarded as a kind of dream or sleep, — that the surface mental consciousness normally passes out of the perception of objective things into the inner subliminal and the superior supramental or overmental status. In that inner condition it sees the supraphysical realities in transcribing figures of dream or vision or, in the superior status, it loses itself in a massed consciousness of which it can receive no thought or image. It is through this subliminal and this superconscient condition that we can pass into the supreme superconscience of the highest state of self-being. If we make the transition, not through dream-trance or sleep-trance, but through a spiritual awakening into these higher states, we become aware in all of them of the one omnipresent Reality; there need be no perception of an illusionary Maya, there is only an experience of the passage from Mind to what is beyond it so that our mental structure of the universe ceases to be valid and another reality

[1] *prajñā*. Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad states very positively that there are two planes or states of the being which are two worlds and that in the dream state one can see both worlds for the dream state is intermediate between them, it is their joining-plane. This makes it clear that he is speaking of a subliminal condition of the consciousness which can carry in it communications between the physical and the supraphysical worlds. The description of the dreamless sleep-state applies both to deep sleep and to the condition of trance in which one enters into a massed consciousness containing in it all the powers of being but all compressed within itself and concentrated solely on itself and, when active, then active in a consciousness where all is the self; this is, clearly, a state admitting us into the higher planes of the spirit normally now superconscient to our waking being.

of it is substituted for the ignorant mental knowledge. In this transition it is possible to be awake to all the states of being together in a harmonised and unified experience and to see the Reality everywhere. But if we plunge by a trance of exclusive concentration into a mystic sleep-state or pass abruptly in waking Mind into a state belonging to the Superconscient, then the mind can be seized in the passage by a sense of the unreality of the cosmic Force and its creations; it passes by a subjective abolition of them into the supreme superconscience. This sense of unreality and this sublimating passage are the spiritual justification for the idea of a world created by Maya; but this consequence is not conclusive, since a larger and more complete conclusion superseding it is possible to spiritual experience.

All these and other solutions of the nature of Maya fail to satisfy because they have no conclusiveness: they do not establish the inevitability of the illusionist hypothesis which, to be accepted, needs to be inevitable; they do not bridge the chasm between the presumed true nature of the eternal Reality and the paradoxical and contrary character of the cosmic Illusion. At the most a process is indicated that claims to make the coexistence of the two opposites conceivable and intelligible; but it has no such force of certitude or illuminating convincingness effectively curing the improbability that its acceptance would be obligatory on the intelligence. The theory of the cosmic Illusion gets rid of an original contradiction, a problem and mystery which may be otherwise soluble, by erecting another contradiction, a new problem and mystery which is irreconcilable in its terms and insoluble. For we start with the conception or experience of an absolute Reality which is in its nature eternally one, supracosmic, static, immobile, immutable, self-aware of its pure existence, and a phenomenon of cosmos, dynamism, motion, mutability, modifications of the original pure existence, differentiation, infinite multiplicity. This phenomenon is got rid of by declaring it to be a perpetual Illusion, Maya. But this brings in, in effect, a self-contradictory dual status of consciousness of the One to annul a self-contradictory dual status of being of the One. A phenomenal truth of multiplicity of the One is

annulled by setting up a conceptual falsehood in the One creating an unreal multiplicity. The One for ever self-aware of its pure existence entertains a perpetual imagination or illusory construction of itself as an infinite multiplicity of ignorant and suffering beings unaware of self who have to wake one by one to awareness of self and cease individually to be.

In face of this solution of a perplexity by a new perplexity we begin to suspect that our original premiss must have been somewhere incomplete, — not an error, but only a first statement and indispensable foundation. We begin to envisage the Reality as an eternal oneness, status, immutable essence of pure existence supporting an eternal dynamis, motion, infinite multiplicity and diversity of itself. The immutable status of oneness brings out of itself the dynamis, motion and multiplicity, — the dynamis, motion and multiplicity not abrogating but bringing into relief the eternal and infinite oneness. If the consciousness of Brahman can be dual in status or action or even manifold, there seems to be no reason why Brahman should be incapable of a dual status or a manifold real self-experience of its being. The cosmic consciousness would then be, not a creative Illusion, but an experience of some truth of the Absolute. This explanation, if worked out, might prove to be more comprehensive and spiritually fecund, more harmonic in its juncture of the two terms of our self-experience, and it would be at least as logically tenable as the idea of an eternal Reality supporting in perpetuity an eternal illusion real only to an infinite multiplicity of ignorant and suffering beings who escape one by one from the obscurity and pain of Maya, each one by a separate extinction of itself in Maya.

In a second possible answer on the illusionist basis to the problem, in the philosophy of Shankara which may be described as a qualified Illusionism, an answer which is presented with a force and comprehensiveness that are extraordinarily impressive, we make a first step towards this solution. For this philosophy affirms a qualified reality for Maya; it characterises it indeed as an ineffable and unaccountable mystery, but at the same time it does present us with a rational solution, at first sight thoroughly satisfactory, of the opposition which afflicts our mind; it accounts for our sense of the persistent and pressing reality of the universe

and our sense of the inconclusiveness, insufficiency, vanity, evanescence, a certain unreality of life and phenomena. For we find a distinction made between two orders of reality, transcendental and pragmatic, absolute and phenomenal, eternal and temporal, — the former the reality of the pure being of Brahman, absolute and supracosmic and eternal, the latter the reality of Brahman in Maya, cosmic, temporal and relative. Here we get a reality for ourselves and the universe: for the individual self is really Brahman; it is Brahman who within the field of Maya seems phenomenally to be subjected to her as the individual and in the end releases the relative and phenomenal individual into his eternal and true being. In the temporal field of relativities our experience of the Brahman who has become all beings, the Eternal who has become universal and individual, is also valid; it is indeed a middle step of the movement in Maya towards liberation from Maya. The universe too and its experiences are real for the consciousness in Time and that consciousness is real. But the quesion of the nature and extent of this reality at once arises: for the universe and ourselves may be a true reality though of a lesser order, or they may be partly real, partly unreal, or they may be an unreal reality. If they are at all a true reality, there is no place for any theory of Maya; there is no illusory creation. If they are partly real, partly unreal, the fault must lie in something wrong either in the cosmic self-awareness or in our own seeing of ourselves and the universe which produces an error of being, an error of knowledge, an error in the dynamis of existence. But that error can amount only to an ignorance or a mixed knowledge and ignorance, and what needs to be explained then is not an original Cosmic Illusion but the intervention of Ignorance in the creative consciousness or in the dynamic action of the Eternal and Infinite. But if universe and ourselves are an unreal reality, if to a transcendental consciousness all this has no truth of existence and its apparent reality ceases once we step out of the field proper to Maya, then the concession accorded with one hand is taken away by the other; for what was conceded as a truth turns out to have been all the time an illusion. Maya and cosmos and ourselves are both real and unreal, — but the reality is an unreal reality,

real only to our ignorance, unreal to any true knowledge.

It is difficult to see why, once any reality is conceded to ourselves and to the universe, it should not be a true reality within its limits. It may be admitted that the manifestation must be on its surface a more restricted reality than the Manifested; our universe is, we may say, one of the rhythms of Brahman and not, except in its essential being, the whole reality: but that is not a sufficient reason for it to be set aside as unreal. It is no doubt so felt by mind withdrawing from itself and its structures: but this is only because the mind is an instrument of Ignorance and, when it withdraws from its constructions, from its ignorant and imperfect picture of the universe, it is impelled to regard them as nothing more than its own fictions and formations, unfounded, unreal; the gulf between its ignorance and the supreme Truth and Knowledge disables it from discovering the true connections of the transcendent Reality and the cosmic Reality. In a higher status of consciousness the difficulty disappears, the connection is established; the sense of unreality recedes and a theory of illusion becomes superfluous and inapplicable. It cannot be the final truth that the Supreme Consciousness has no regard upon the universe or that it regards it as a fiction which its self in Time upholds as real. The cosmic can only exist by dependence on the supracosmic, Brahman in Time must have some significance for Brahman in timeless eternity; otherwise there could be no self and spirit in things and therefore no basis for the temporal existence.

But the universe is condemned as ultimately unreal because it is temporary and not eternal, a perishable form of being imposed on the Formless and Imperishable. This relation can be illustrated by the analogy of earth and the pot made out of earth: the pot and other forms so created perish and go back to the reality, earth, they are only evanescent forms; when they disappear there is left the formless and essential earth and nothing else. But this analogy can tell more convincingly the other way; for the pot is real by right of its being made out of the substance of earth which is real; it is not an illusion and, even when it is dissolved into the original earth, its past existence cannot be thought to have been unreal or an illusion. The relation is not

that of an original reality and a phenomenal unreality, but of an original, — or, if we go back from earth to the invisible substratum and constituent ether, an eternal and non-manifest, — to a resultant and dependent, a temporal and manifested reality. Moreover, the pot form is an eternal possibility of earth substance, or ethereal substance, and while the substance exists the form can always be manifested. A form may disappear, but it only passes out of manifestation into non-manifestation; a world may disappear, but there is no proof that world-existence is an evanescent phenomenon: on the contrary, we may suppose that the power of manifestation is inherent in Brahman and continues to act either continuously in Time-eternity or in an eternal recurrence. The cosmic is a different order of the Real from the supracosmic Transcendence, but there is no need to take it as in any way non-existent or unreal to that Transcendence. For the purely intellectual conception that only the Eternal is real, whether we take it in the sense that reality depends on perpetual duration or that the timeless only is true, is an ideative distinction, a mental construction; it is not binding on a substantial and integral experience. Time is not necessarily cancelled out of existence by timeless Eternity; there relation is only verbally a relation of contradiction; in fact, it is more likely to be a relation of dependence.

Similarly, the reasoning which cancels the dynamics of the Absolute, the imposition of the stigma of unreal reality on the pragmatic truth of things because it is pragmatic, is difficult to accept; for the pragmatic truth is after all not something quite other, quite separate and unconnected with spiritual truth, it is a result of the energy or a motion of the dynamic activity of the Spirit. A distinction must, no doubt, be made between the two, but the idea of an entire opposition can rest only on the postulate that a silent and quiescent status is the Eternal's true and whole being; but in that case we must conclude that there is nothing dynamic in the Absolute and all dynamism is a contradiction of the supreme nature of the Divine and Eternal. But if a temporal or cosmic reality of any kind exists, there must be a power, an inherent dynamic force of the Absolute which brought it into being, and there is no reason to suppose that the power of the

Absolute can do nothing but create illusions. On the contrary, the Power that creates must be the force of an omnipotent and omniscient Consciousness; the creations of the absolutely Real should be real and not illusions, and since it is the One Existence, they must be self-creations, forms of a manifestation of the Eternal, not forms of Nothing erected out of the original Void, —whether a void being or a void consciousness, — by Maya.

At the basis of the refusal to recognise the universe as real is the concept or experience of the Reality as immutable, featureless, non-active and realised through a consciousness that has itself fallen into a status of silence and is immobile. The universe is a result of dynamis in movement, it is force of being throwing itself out in action, energy at work, whether that energy be conceptive or mechanical or a spiritual, mental, vital or material dynamis; it can thus be regarded as a contradiction, — or a derogation from self, — of the static and immobile eternal Reality, therefore unreal. But as a concept this position of the thought has no inevitability; there is no reason why we should not conceive of the Reality as at once static and dynamic. It is perfectly rational to suppose that the eternal status of being of the Reality contains in it an eternal force of being, and this dynamis must necessarily carry in itself a power of action and movement, a kinesis; both status of being and movement of being can be real. There is no reason either why they should not be simultaneous; on the contrary, simultaneity is demanded, — for all energy, all kinetic action has to support itself on status or by status if it is to be effective or creative; otherwise there will be no solidity of anything created, only a constant whirl without any formation: status of being, form of being are necessary to kinesis of being. Even if energy be the primal reality, as it seems to be in the material world, still it has to create status of itself, lasting forms, duration of beings in order to have a support for its action: the status may be temporary, it may be only a balance or equilibrium of substance created and maintained by a constant kinesis, but while it endures it is real and, after it ceases, we still regard it as something that was real. The principle of a supporting status for action is a permanent principle, and its action is constant in

Time-eternity. When we discover the stable Reality underlying all this movement of energy and this creation of forms, we do indeed perceive that the status of created forms is only temporary; there is a stability of repetition of the kinesis in a same persistent action and figure of movement which maintains substance of being in stable form of itself: but this stability is created, and the one permanent and self-existent status is that of the eternal Being whose Energy erected the forms. But we need not therefore conclude that the temporary forms are unreal; for the energy of the being is real and the forms made by it are forms of the being. In any case the status of the being and the eternal dynamis of the being are both real, and they are simultaneous; the status admits of action of dynamis and the action does not abrogate the status. We must therefore conclude that eternal status and eternal dynamis are both true of the Reality which itself surpasses both status and dynamis; the immobile and the mobile Brahman are both the same Reality.

But in experience we find that for us it is, normally, a quiescence that brings in the stable realisation of the eternal and the infinite: it is in silence or quietude that we feel most firmly the Something that is behind the world shown to us by our mind and senses. Our cognitive action of thought, our action of life and being seem to overlay the truth, the reality; they grasp the finite but not the infinite, they deal with the temporal and not the eternal Real. It is reasoned that this is so because all action, all creation, all determining perception limits; it does not embrace or grasp the Reality, and its constructions disappear when we enter into the indivisible and indeterminable consciousness of the Real: these constructions are unreal in eternity, however real they may seem or be in Time. Action leads to ignorance, to the created and finite; kinesis and creation are a contradiction of the immutable Reality, the pure uncreated Existence. But this reasoning is not wholly valid because it is looking at perception and action only as they are in our mental cognition of the world and its movement; but that is the experience of our surface being regarding things from its shifting motion in Time, a regard itself superficial, fragmentary and delimited, not total, not plunging into the inner sense of

things. In fact we find that action need not bind or limit, if we get out of this moment-cognition into a status of cognition of the eternal proper to the true consciousness. Action does not bind or limit the liberated man; action does not bind or limit the Eternal: but we can go farther and say that action does not bind or limit our own true being at all. Action has no such effect on the spiritual Person or Purusha or on the psychic entity within us, it binds or limits only the surface constructed personality. This personality is a temporary expression of our self-being, a changing form of it, empowered to exist by it, dependent on it for substance and endurance, — temporary, but not unreal. Our thought and action are means for this expression of ourselves and, as the expression is incomplete and evolutive, as it is a development of our natural being in Time, thought and action help it to develop, to change, to alter and expand its limits, but at the same time to maintain limits; in that sense they are limiting and binding; they are themselves an incomplete mode of self-revelation. But when we go back into ourselves, into the true self and person, there is no longer a binding or limitation by the limits of action or perception; both arise as expressions of consciousness and expressions of force of the self operative for a free self-determination of its nature-being, for the self-unrolling, the becoming in time of something that is itself illimitable. The limitation, which is a necessary circumstance of an evolutive self-determination, might be an abrogation of self or derogation from self, from Reality, and therefore itself unreal, if it altered the essentiality or totality of the being; it would be a bondage of the spirit and therefore illegitimate if it obscured, by an alien imposition proceeding from a force that is not-self, the Consciousness that is the inmost witness and creator of our world-existence, or if it constructed something contrary to the Being's consciousness of self or will of becoming. But the essence of being remains the same in all action and formation, and the limitations freely accepted do not take from the being's totality; they are accepted and self-imposed, not imposed from outside, they are a means of expression of our totality in the movement of Time, an order of things imposed by our inner spiritual being on our outer nature-being, not a bondage inflicted

on the ever-free spirit. There is therefore no reason to conclude from the limitations of perception and action that the movement is unreal or that the expression, formation or self-creation of the Spirit is unreal. It is a temporal order of reality, but it is still a reality of the Real, not something else. All that is in the kinesis, the movement, the action, the creation, is the Brahman; the becoming is a movement of the being; Time is a manifestation of the Eternal. All is one Being, one Consciousness, one even in infinite multiplicity, and there is no need to bisect it into an opposition of transcendent Reality and unreal cosmic Maya.

In the philosophy of Shankara one feels the presence of a conflict, an opposition which this powerful intellect has stated with full force and masterfully arranged rather than solved with any finality, — the conflict of an intuition intensely aware of an absolute transcendent and inmost Reality and a strong intellectual reason regarding the world with a keen and vigorous rational intelligence. The intellect of the thinker regards the phenomenal world from the standpoint of the reason; reason is there the judge and the authority and no suprarational authority can prevail against it: but behind the phenomenal world is a transcendent Reality which the intuition alone can see; there reason, — at least a finite dividing limited reason, — cannot prevail against the intuitive experience, it cannot even relate the two, it cannot therefore solve the mystery of the universe. The reason has to affirm the reality of the phenomenal existence, to affirm its truths as valid; but they are valid only in that phenomenal existence. This phenomenal existence is real because it is a temporal phenomenon of the eternal Existence, the Reality: but it is not itself that Reality and, when we pass beyond the phenomenon to the Real, it still exists but is no longer valid to our consciousness; it is therefore unreal. Shankara takes up this contradiction, this opposition which is normal to our mental consciousness when it becomes aware of both sides of existence and stands between them; he resolves it by obliging the reason to recognise its limits, in which its unimpaired sovereignty is left to it within its own cosmic province, and to acquiesce in the soul's intuition of the transcendent Reality and to support, by a

dialectic which ends by dissolving the whole cosmic phenomenal and rational-practical edifice of things, its escape from the limitations constructed and imposed on the mind by Maya. The explanation of cosmic existence by which this is brought about seems to be, — or so we may translate it to our understanding, for there have been different expositions of this profound and subtle philosophy, — that there is a Transcendence which is for ever self-existent and immutable and a world which is only phenomenal and temporal. The eternal Reality manifests itself in regard to the phenomenal world as Self and Ishwara. The Ishwara by his Maya, his power of phenomenal creation, constructs this world as a temporal phenomenon, and this phenomenon of things which do not exist in the utterly Real is imposed by Maya through our conceptive and perceptive consciousness on the superconscient or purely self-conscient Reality. Brahman the Reality appears in the phenomenal existence as the Self of the living individual; but when the individuality of the individual is dissolved by intuitive knowledge, the phenomenal being is released into self-being: it is no longer subject to Maya and by its release from the appearance of individuality it is extinguished in the Reality; but the world continues to exist without beginning or end as the Mayic creation of the Ishwara.

This is an arrangement which puts into relation with each other the data of the spiritual intuition and the data of the reason and sense, and it opens to us a way out from their contradiction, a spiritual and practical issue: but it is not a solution, it does not resolve the contradiction. Maya is real and unreal; the world is not a mere illusion, for it exists and is real in Time, but eventually and transcendentally it turns out to be unreal. This creates an ambiguity which extends beyond itself and touches all that is not the pure self-existence. Thus the Ishwara, though he is undeluded by Maya and the creator of Maya, seems himself to be a phenomenon of Brahman and not the ultimate Reality, he is real only with regard to the Time-world he creates; the individual self has the same ambiguous character. If Maya were to cease altogether from its operations, Ishwara, the world and the individual would no longer be there; but Maya is eternal, Ishwara and the world are eternal in Time, the indi-

vidual endures so long as he does not annul himself by knowledge. Our thought on these premisses has to take refuge in the conception of an ineffable suprarational mystery which is to the intellect insoluble. But, faced with this ambiguity, this admission of an insoluble mystery at the commencement of things and at the end of the process of thought, we begin to suspect that there is a link missing. Ishwara is not himself a phenomenon of Maya, he is real; he must then be the manifestation of a truth of the Transcendence, or he must be the Transcendent itself dealing with a cosmos manifested in his own being. If the world is at all real, it also must be the manifestation of a truth of the Transcendence; for only that can have any reality. If the individual has the power of self-discovery and entrance into the transcendent eternity and his liberation has so great an importance, it must be because he too is a reality of the Transcendence; he has to discover himself individually, because his individuality also has some truth of itself in the Transcendence which is veiled from it and which it has to recover. It is an ignorance of self and world that has to be overcome and not an illusion, a figment of individuality and world-existence.

It becomes evident that as the Transcendence is suprarational and seizable only by an intuitive experience and realisation, so also the mystery of the universe is suprarational. It has to be so since it is a phenomenon of the transcendent Reality, and it would not, if it were otherwise, be insoluble by the intellectual reason. But if so, we have to pass beyond the intellect in order to bridge the gulf and penetrate the mystery; to leave an unsolved contradiction cannot be the final solution. It is the intellectual reason that crystallises and perpetuates an apparent contradiction by creating its opposite or dividing concepts of the Brahman, the Self, the Ishwara, the individual being, the supreme consciousness or superconscience and the Mayic world-consciousness. If Brahman alone exists, all these must be Brahman, and in Brahman-consciousness the division of these concepts must disappear in a reconciling self-vision; but we can arrive at their true unity only by passing beyond the intellectual Reason and finding out through spiritual experience where they meet and become one and what is the spiritual reality of their

apparent divergence. In fact, in the Brahman-consciousness the divergences cannot exist, they must by our passage into it converge into unity; the divisions of the intellectual reason may correspond to a reality, but it must be then the reality of a manifold Oneness. The Buddha applied his penetrating rational intellect supported by an intuitive vision to the world as our mind and sense see it and discovered the principle of its construction and the way of release from all constructions, but he refused to go farther. Shankara took the farther step and regarded the suprarational Truth, which Buddha kept behind the veil as realisable by cancellation of the constructions of consciousness but beyond the scope of the reason's discovery. Shankara, standing between the world and the eternal Reality, saw that the mystery of the world must be ultimately suprarational, not conceivable or expressible by our reason, *anirvacanīya*; but he maintained the world as seen by the reason and sense as valid and had therefore to posit an unreal reality, because he did not take one step still farther. For to know the real truth of the world, its reality, it must be seen from the suprarational awareness, from the view of the Superconscience that maintains and surpasses and by surpassing knows it in its truth, and no longer from the view of the consciousness that is maintained by it and surpassed by it and therefore does not know it or knows it only by its appearance. It cannot be that to that self-creative supreme consciousness the world is an incomprehensible mystery or that it is to it an illusion that is yet not altogether an illusion, a reality that is yet unreal. The mystery of the universe must have a divine sense to the Divine; it must have a significance or a truth of cosmic being that is luminous to the Reality that upholds it with its transcending and yet immanent superconscience.

If the Reality alone exists and all is the Reality, the world also cannot be excluded from that Reality; the universe is real. If it does not reveal to us in its forms and powers the Reality that it is, if it seems only a persistent and yet changing movement in Space and Time, this must be not because it is unreal or because it is not at all That, but because it is a progressive self-expression, a manifestation, an evolving self-development of That in Time which our consciousness cannot yet see in its total or its essential

significance. In this sense we can say that it is That and not That, — because it does not disclose all the Reality through any form or sum of its forms of self-expression; but still all its forms are forms of the substance and being of that Reality. All finites are in their spiritual essence the Infinite and, if we look deep enough into them, manifest to intuition the Identical and Infinite. It is contended indeed that the universe cannot be a manifestation because the Reality has no need of manifestation, since it is for ever manifest to itself; but so equally it can be said that the Reality has no need of self-illusion or illusion of any kind, no need to create a Mayic universe. The Absolute can have no need of anything; but still there can be, — not coercive of its freedom, not binding on it, but an expression of its self-force, the result of its Will to become, — an imperative of a supreme self-effectuating Force, a necessity of self-creation born of the power of the Absolute to see itself in Time. This imperative represents itself to us as a Will to create, a Will of self-expression; but it may be better represented as a force of being of the Absolute which displays itself as a power of itself in action. If the Absolute is self-evident to itself in eternal Timelessness, it can also be self-manifest to itself in eternal motion of Time. Even if the universe is only a phenomenal reality, still it is a manifestation or phenomenon of Brahman; for since all is Brahman, phenomenon and manifestation must be the same thing: the imputation of unreality is a superfluous conception, otiose and unnecessarily embarrassing, since whatever distinction is needed is already there in the concept of Time and the timeless Eternal and the concept of manifestation.

The one thing that can be described as an unreal reality is our individual sense of separativeness and the conception of the finite as a self-existent object in the Infinite. This conception, this sense are pragmatically necessary for the operations of the surface individuality and are effective and justified by their effects; they are therefore real to its finite reason and finite self-experience: but once we step back from the finite consciousness into the consciousness of the essential and infinite, from the apparent to the true Person, the finite or the individual still exists but as being and power and manifestation of the Infinite;

it has no independent or separate reality. Individual independence, entire separativeness are not necessary for individual reality, do not constitute it. On the other hand, the disappearance of these finite forms of the manifestation is evidently a factor in the problem, but does not by itself convict them of unreality; the disappearance may be only a withdrawal from manifestation. The cosmic manifestation of the Timeless takes place in the successions of Time: its forms must therefore be temporary in their appearance on the surface, but they are eternal in their essential power of manifestation; for they are held always implicit and potential in the essence of things and in the essential consciousness from which they emerge: timeless consciousness can always turn their abiding potentiality into terms of time-actuality. The world would be unreal only if itself and its forms were images without substance of being, figments of consciousness presented to itself by the Reality as pure figments and then abolished for ever. But if manifestation or the power of manifestation is eternal, if all is the being of Brahman, the Reality, then this unreality or illusoriness cannot be the fundamental character of things or of the cosmos in which they make their appearance.

A theory of Maya in the sense of illusion or the unreality of cosmic existence creates more difficulties than it solves; it does not really solve the problem of existence, but rather renders it for ever insoluble. For, whether Maya be an unreality or a non-real reality, the ultimate effects of the theory carry in them a devastating simplicity of nullification. Ourselves and the universe fade away into nothingness or else keep for a time only a truth which is little better than a fiction. In the thesis of the pure unreality of Maya, all experience, all knowledge as well as all ignorance, the knowledge that frees us no less than the ignorance that binds us, world-acceptance and world-refusal, are two sides of an illusion; for there is nothing to accept or refuse, nobody to accept or refuse it. All the time it was only the immutable superconscient Reality that at all existed; the bondage and release were only appearances, not a reality. All attachment to world-existence is an illusion, but the call for liberation is also a circumstance of the illusion; it is something

that was created in Maya which by its liberation is extinguished in Maya. But this nullification cannot be compelled to stop short in its devastating advance at the boundary fixed for it by a spiritual Illusionism. For if all other experiences of the individual consciousness in the universe are illusions, then what guarantee is there that its spiritual experiences are not illusions, including even its absorbed self-experience of the supreme Self which is conceded to us as utterly real? For if cosmos is untrue, our experience of the cosmic consciousness, of the universal Self, of Brahman as all these beings or as the self of all these beings, the One in all, all in the One has no secure foundation, since it reposes in one of its terms on an illusion, on a construction of Maya. That term, the cosmic term, has to crumble, for all these beings which we saw as the Brahman were illusions; then what is our assurance of our experience of the other term, the pure Self, the silent, static or absolute Reality, since that too comes to us in a mind moulded of delusion and formed in a body created by an Illusion? An overwhelming self-evident convincingness, an experience of absolute authenticity in the realisation or experience is not an unanswerable proof of sole reality or sole finality: for other spiritual experiences such as that of the omnipresent Divine Person, Lord of a real Universe, have the same convincing, authentic and final character. It is open to the intellect which has once arrived at the conviction of the unreality of all other things, to take a farther step and deny the reality of Self and of all existence. The Buddhists took this last step and refused reality to the Self on the ground that it was as much as the rest a construction of the mind; they cut not only God but the eternal Self and impersonal Brahman out of the picture.

An uncompromising theory of Illusion solves no problem of our existence; it only cuts the problem out for the individual by showing him a way of exit: in its extreme form and effect, our being and its action become null and without sanction, its experience, aspiration, endeavour lose their significance; all, the one incommunicable relationless Truth excepted and the turning away to it, become equated with illusion of being, are part of a universal Illusion and themselves illusions. God and our-

selves and the universe become myths of Maya; for God is only a reflection of Brahman in Maya, ourselves are only a reflection of Brahman in illusory individuality, the world is only an imposition on the Brahman's incommunicable self-existence. There is a less drastic nullification if a certain reality is admitted for the being even within the illusion, a certain validity for the experience and knowledge by which we grow into the spirit: but this is only if the temporal has a valid reality and the experience in it has a real validity, and in that case what we are in front of is not an illusion taking the unreal for real but an ignorance misapprehending the real. Otherwise if the beings of whom Brahman is the self are illusory, its selfhood is not valid, it is part of an illusion; the experience of self is also an illusion: the experience "I am That" is vitiated by an ignorant conception, for there is no I, only That; the experience "I am He" is doubly ignorant, for it assumes a conscious Eternal, a Lord of the universe, a Cosmic Being, but there can be no such thing if there is no reality in the universe. A real solution of existence can only stand upon a truth that accounts for our existence and world-existence, reconciles their truth, their right relation and the truth of their relation to whatever transcendent Reality is the source of everything. But this implies some reality of individual and cosmos, some true relation of the One Existence and all existences, of relative experience and of the Absolute.

The theory of Illusion cuts the knot of the world problem, it does not disentangle it; it is an escape, not a solution: a flight of the spirit is not a sufficient victory for the being embodied in this world of the becoming; it effects a separation from Nature, not a liberation and fulfilment of our nature. This eventual outcome satisfies only one element, sublimates only one impulse of our being; it leaves the rest out in the cold to perish in the twilight of the unreal reality of Maya. As in Science, so in metaphysical thought, that general and ultimate solution is likely to be the best which includes and accounts for all so that each truth of experience takes its place in the whole: that knowledge is likely to be the highest knowledge which illumines, integralises, harmonises the significance of all knowledge and accounts for, finds the basic and, one might almost say, the justifying reason

of our ignorance and illusion while it cures them; this is the supreme experience which gathers together all experience in the truth of a supreme and all-reconciling oneness. Illusionism unifies by elimination; it deprives all knowledge and experience, except the one supreme merger, of reality and significance.

But this debate belongs to the domain of the pure reason and the final test of truths of this order is not reason but spiritual illumination verified by abiding fact of spirit; a single decisive spiritual experience may undo a whole edifice of reasonings and conclusions erected by the logical intelligence. Here the theory of Illusionism is in occupation of a very solid ground; for, although it is in itself no more than a mental formulation, the experience it formulates into a philosophy accompanies a most powerful and apparently final spiritual realisation. It comes upon us with a great force of awakening to reality when the thought is stilled, when the mind withdraws from its constructions, when we pass into a pure selfhood void of all sense of individuality, empty of all cosmic contents: if the spiritualised mind then looks at individual and cosmos, they may well seem to it to be an illusion, a scheme of names and figures and movements falsely imposed on the sole reality of the Self-Existent. Or even the sense of self becomes inadequate; both knowledge and ignorance disappear into sheer Consciousness and consciousness is plunged into a trance of pure superconscient existence. Or even existence ends by becoming too limiting a name for that which abides solely for ever; there is only a timeless Eternal, a spaceless Infinite, the utterness of the Absolute, a nameless peace, an overwhelming single objectless Ecstasy. There can certainly be no doubt of the validity, — complete within itself, — of this experience; there can be no denial of the overwhelming decisive convincingness, — *ekātma-pratyaya-sāram*, — with which this realisation seizes the consciousness of the spiritual seeker. But still all spiritual experience is experience of the Infinite and it takes a multitude of directions; some of them, — and not this alone, — are so close to the Divine and the Absolute, so penetrated with the reality of Its presence or with the ineffable peace and power of the liberation from all that is less than It, that they carry with them this overwhelming sense of finality complete

and decisive. There are a hundred ways of approaching the Supreme Reality and, as is the nature of the way taken, so will be the nature of the ultimate experience by which one passes into That which is ineffable, That of which no report can be given to the mind or expressed by any utterance. All these definitive culminations may be regarded as penultimates of the one Ultimate; they are steps by which the soul crosses the limits of Mind into the Absolute. Is then this realisation of passing into a pure immobile self-existence or this Nirvana of the individual and the universe one among these penultimates, or is it itself the final and absolute realisation which is at the end of every journey and transcends and eliminates all lesser experience? It claims to stand behind and supersede, to sublate and to eliminate every other knowledge; if that is really so, then its finality must be accepted as conclusive. But, against this pretension, it has been claimed that it is possible to travel beyond by a greater negation or a greater affirmation, — to extinguish self in Non-Being or to pass through the double experience of cosmic consciousness and Nirvana of world-consciousness in the One Existence to a greater Divine Union and Unity which holds both these realisations in its vast integral Reality. It is said that beyond the duality and the non-duality there is That in which both are held together and find their truth in a Truth which is beyond them. A consummating experience which proceeds by the exceeding and elimination of all other possible but lesser experiences is, as a step towards the Absolute, admissible. A supreme experience which affirms and includes the truth of all spiritual experience, gives to each its own absolute, integralises all knowledge and experience in a supreme reality, might be the one step farther that is at once a largest illuminating and transforming Truth of all things and a highest infinite Transcendence. The Brahman, the supreme Reality, is That which being known all is known; but in the illusionist solution it is That, which being known, all becomes unreal and an incomprehensible mystery: in this other experience, the Reality being known, all assumes its true significance, its truth to the Eternal and Absolute.

All truths, even those which seem to be in conflict, have their validity, but they need a reconciliation in some largest Truth

which takes them into itself; all philosophies have their value, — if for nothing else, then because they see the Self and the universe from a point of view of the spirit's experience of the many-sided Manifestation and in doing so shed light on something that has to be known in the Infinite. All spiritual experiences are true, but they point towards some highest and widest reality which admits their truth and exceeds it. This is, we may say, a sign of the relativity of all truth and all experience, since both vary with the outlook and the inlook of the knowing and experiencing mind and being; each man is said to have his own religion according to his own nature, but so too each man may be said to have his own philosophy, his own way of seeing and experience of existence, though only a few can formulate it. But from another point of view this variety testifies rather to the infinity of aspects of the Infinite; each catches a partial glimpse or a whole glimpse of one or more aspects or contacts or enters into it in his mental or his spiritual experience. To the mind at a certain stage all these viewpoints begin to lose their definitiveness in a large catholicity or a complex tolerant incertitude, or all the rest may fall away from it and yield place to an ultimate truth or a single absorbing experience. It is then that it is liable to feel the unreality of all that it has seen and thought and taken as part of itself or its universe. This "all" becomes to it a universal unreality or a many-sided fragmental reality without a principle of unification; as it passes into the negativing purity of an absolute experience, all falls away from it and there remains only a silent and immobile Absolute. But the consciousness might be called to go farther and see again all it has left in the light of a new spiritual vision: it may recover the truth of all things in the truth of the Absolute; it may reconcile the negation of Nirvana and the affirmation of the cosmic consciousness in a single regard of That of which both are the self-expressions. In the passage from mental to overmind cognition this many-sided unity is the leading experience; the whole manifestation assumes the appearance of a singular and mighty harmony which reaches its greatest completeness when the soul stands on the border between Overmind and Supermind and looks back with a total view upon existence.

This is at least a possibility that we have to explore and

pursue this view of things to its ultimate consequence. A consideration of the possibility of a great cosmic Illusion as the explanation of the enigma of being had to be undertaken because this view and experience of things presents itself powerfully at the end of the mental spiral where that reaches its point of breaking or point of cessation; but once it is ascertained that it is not the obligatory end of a scrupulous enquiry into the ultimate truth, we can leave it aside or refer to it only when needed in connection with some line of a more plastic course of thought and reasoning. Our regard can now be concentrated on the problem that is left by the exclusion of the illusionist solution, the problem of the Knowledge and the Ignorance.

All turns round the question "What is Reality?" Our cognitive consciousness is limited, ignorant, finite; our conceptions of reality depend on our way of contact with existence in this limited consciousness and may be very different from the way in which an original and ultimate Consciousness sees it. It is necessary to distinguish between the essential Reality, the phenomenal reality dependent upon it and arising out of it, and the restricted and often misleading experience or notion of either that is created by our sense-experience and our reason. To our sense the earth is flat and, for most immediate practical purposes, within a limit, we have to follow the sense reality and deal with the flatness as if it were a fact; but in true phenomenal reality the flatness of the earth is unreal, and Science seeking for the truth of the phenomenal reality in things has to treat it as approximately round. In a host of details Science contradicts the evidence of the senses as to the real truth of phenomena; but, still, we have to accept the cadre provided by our senses because the practical relations with things which they impose on us have validity as an effect of reality and cannot be disregarded. Our reason, relying on the senses and exceeding them, constructs its own canons or notions of the real and unreal, but these canons vary according to the standpoint taken by the reasoning observer. The physical scientist probing into phenomena erects formulas and standards based on the objective and phenomenal reality and its processes: to his view mind may appear as a subjective result of Matter and self and spirit as unreal; at any rate he has to act as if matter and energy alone

existed and mind were only an observer of an independent physical reality which is unaffected by any mental processes[1] or any presence or intervention of a cosmic Intelligence. The psychologist, probing independently into mind consciousness and mind unconsciousness, discovers another domain of realities, subjective in its character, which has its own law and process; to him Mind may even come to appear as the key of the real, Matter as only a field for mind, and spirit apart from mind as something unreal. But there is a farther probing which brings up the truth of self and spirit and establishes a greater order of the real in which there is a reversal of our view both of the subjective mind realities and objective physical realities so that they are seen as things phenomenal, secondary, dependent upon the truth of self and the realities of the spirit. In this deeper search into things mind and matter begin to wear the appearance of a lesser order of the real and may easily come to appear unreal.

But it is the reason accustomed to deal with the finite that makes these exclusions; it cuts the whole into segments and can select one segment of the whole as if it were the entire reality. This is necessary for its action since its business is to deal with the finite as finite, and we have to accept for practical purposes and for the reason's dealings with the finite the cadre it gives us, because it is valid as an effect of reality and so cannot be disregarded. When we come to the experience of the spiritual which is itself the whole or contains the whole in itself, our mind carries there too its segmenting reason and the definitions necessary to a finite cognition; it cuts a line of section between the infinite and the finite, the spirit and its phenomena or manifestations, and dubs those as real and these as unreal. But an original and ultimate consciousness embracing all the terms of existence in a single integral view would see the whole in its spiritual essential reality and the phenomenon as a phenomenon or manifestation of that reality. If this greater spiritual consciousness saw in things only unreality and an entire disconnection with the truth of the spirit, it could not have — if it were itself a Truth-Consciousness — any reason for maintaining them in continuous

[1] This position has been shaken by the theory of Relativity, but it must hold as a pragmatic basis for experiment and affirmation of the scientific fact.

or recurrent existence through all Time: if it so maintains them, it is because they are based on the realities of the spirit. But, necessarily, when thus integrally seen, the phenomenal reality would take on another appearance than when it is viewed by the reason and sense of the finite being; it would have another and deeper reality, another and greater significance, another and more subtle and complex process of its movements of existence. The canons of reality and all the forms of thought created by the finite reason and sense would appear to the greater consciousness as partial constructions with an element of truth in them and an element of error; these constructions might therefore be described as at once real and unreal, but the phenomenal world itself would not become either unreal or unreal-real by that fact: it would put on another reality of a spiritual character; the finite would reveal itself as a power, a movement, a process of the Infinite.

An original and ultimate consciousness would be a consciousness of the Infinite and necessarily unitarian in its view of diversity, integral, all-accepting, all-embracing, all-discriminating because all-determining, an indivisible whole-vision. It would see the essence of things and regard all forms and movements as phenomenon and consequence of the essential Reality, motions and formations of its power of being. It is held by the reason that truth must be empty of any conflict of contradictions: if so, since the phenomenal universe is or seems to be the contrary of the essential Brahman it must be unreal; since individual being is the contrary of both transcendence and universality, it must be unreal. But what appear as contradictions to a reason based on the finite may not be contradictions to a vision or a larger reason based on the infinite. What our mind sees as contraries may be to the infinite consciousness not contraries but complementaries: essence and phenomenon of the essence are complementary to each other, not contradictory, — the phenomenon manifests the essence; the finite is a circumstance and not a contradiction of the infinite; the individual is a self-expression of the universal and the transcendent, — it is not a contradiction or something quite other than it, it is the universal concentrated and selective, it is one with the Transcendent in its

essence of being and its essence of nature. In the view of this unitarian comprehensive seeing there is nothing contradictory in a formless Essence of being that carries a multitude of forms, or in a status of the Infinite supporting a kinesis of the Infinite, or in an infinite Oneness expressing itself in a multiplicity of beings and aspects and powers and movements, for they are beings and aspects and powers and movements of the One. A world-creation on this basis is a perfectly natural and normal and inevitable movement which in itself raises no problem, since it is exactly what one must expect in an action of the Infinite. All the intellectual problem and difficulty is raised by the finite reason cutting, separating, opposing the power of the Infinite to its being, its kinesis to its status, its natural multiplicity to its essential oneness, segmenting self, opposing Spirit to Nature. To understand truly the world-process of the Infinite and the Time-process of the Eternal, the consciousness must pass beyond this finite reason and the finite sense to a larger reason and spiritual sense in touch with the consciousness of the Infinite and responsive to the logic of the Infinite which is the very logic of being itself and arises inevitably from its self-operation of its own realities, a logic whose sequences are not the steps of thought but the steps of existence.

But what has been thus described, it may be said, is only a cosmic consciousness and there is the Absolute: the Absolute cannot be limited; since universe and individual limit and divide the Absolute, they must be unreal. It is self-evident indeed that the Absolute cannot be limited; it can be limited neither by formlessness nor by form, neither by unity nor by multiplicity, neither by immobile status nor by dynamic mobility. If it manifests form, form cannot limit it; if it manifests multiplicity, multiplicity cannot divide it; if it manifests motion and becoming, motion cannot perturb nor becoming change it: it cannot be limited any more than it can be exhausted by self-creation. Even material things have this superiority to their manifestation; earth is not limited by the vessels made from it, nor air by the winds that move in it, nor the sea by the waves that rise on its surface. This impression of limitation belongs only to the mind and sense which see the finite as if it were an independent entity

separating itself from the Infinite or something cut out of it by limitation: it is this impression that is illusory, but neither the infinite nor the finite is an illusion; for neither exists by the impressions of the sense or the mind, they depend for their existence on the Absolute.

The Absolute is in itself indefinable by reason, ineffable to the speech; it has to be approached through experience. It can be approached through an absolute negation of existence, as if it were itself a supreme Non-Existence, a mysterious infinite Nihil. It can be approached through an absolute affirmation of all the fundamentals of our own existence, through an absolute of Light and Knowledge, through an absolute of Love or Beauty, through an absolute of Force, through an absolute of peace or silence. It can be approached through an inexpressible absolute of being or of consciousness, or of power of being, or of delight of being, or through a supreme experience in which these things become inexpressibly one; for we can enter into such an ineffable state and, plunged into it as if into a luminous abyss of existence, we can reach a superconscience which may be described as the gate of the Absolute. It is supposed that it is only through a negation of individual and cosmos that we can enter into the Absolute. But in fact the individual need only deny his own small separate ego-existence; he can approach the Absolute through a sublimation of his spiritual individuality taking up the cosmos into himself and transcending it; or he may negate himself altogether, but even so it is still the individual who by self-exceeding enters into the Absolute. He may enter also by a sublimation of his being into a supreme existence or super-existence, by a sublimation of his consciousness into a supreme consciousness or super-conscience, by a sublimation of his and all delight of being into a super-delight or supreme ecstasy. He can make the approach through an ascension in which he enters into cosmic consciousness, assumes it into himself and raises himself and it into a state of being in which oneness and multiplicity are in perfect harmony and unison in a supreme status of manifestation where all are in each and each in all and all in the one without any determining individuation, — for the dynamic identity and mutuality have become complete; on the path

of affirmation it is this status of the manifestation that is nearest to the Absolute. This paradox of an Absolute which can be realised through an absolute negation and through an absolute affirmation, in many ways, can only be accounted for to the reason if it is a supreme Existence which is so far above our notion and experience of existence that it can correspond also to our negation of it, to our notion and experience of non-existence, but also, since all that exists is That, whatever its degree of manifestation, it is itself the supreme of all things and can be approached through supreme affirmations as through supreme negations. The Absolute is the ineffable *x* overtopping and underlying and immanent and essential in all that we can call existence or non-existence.

It is our first premiss that the Absolute is the supreme reality; but the issue is whether all else that we experience is real or unreal. A distinction is sometimes made between being and existence, and it is supposed that being is real but existence or what manifests as such is unreal. But this can stand only if there is a rigid distinction, a cut and separation between the uncreated Eternal and created existences; the uncreated Being can then be taken as alone real. This conclusion does not follow if what exists is form of Being and substance of Being; it would be unreal only if it were a form of Non-Being, *asat*, created out of the Void, *śūnya*. The states of existence through which we approach and enter into the Absolute must have their truth, for the untrue and unreal cannot lead into the Real: but also what issues from the Absolute, what the Eternal supports and informs and manifests in itself, must have a reality. There is the unmanifest and there is the manifestation, but a manifestation of the Real must itself be real; there is the Timeless and there is the process of things in Time, but nothing can appear in Time unless it has a basis in the timeless Reality. If my self and spirit are real, my thoughts, feelings, powers of all kinds, which are its expressions, cannot be unreal; my body, which is the form it puts out in itself and which at the same time it inhabits, cannot be a nothing or a mere unsubstantial shadow. The only reconciling explanation is that timeless eternity and time eternity are two aspects of the Eternal and

Absolute and both are real, but in a different order of reality: what is unmanifest in the Timeless manifests itself in Time; each thing that exists is real in its own degree of the manifestation and is so seen by the consciousness of the Infinite.

All manifestation depends upon being, but also upon consciousness and its power or degree; for as is the status of consciousness, so will be the status of being. Even the Inconscient is a status and power of involved consciousness in which being is plunged into another and opposite state of non-manifestation resembling non-existence so that out of it all in the material universe may be manifested; so too the superconscient is consciousness taken up into an absolute of being. For there is a superconscient status in which consciousness seems to be luminously involved in being and as if unaware of itself; all consciousness of being, all knowledge, self-vision, force of being, seem to emerge from that involved state or to appear in it: this emergence, in our view of it, may appear to be an emergence into a lesser reality, but in fact both the superconscience and the consciousness are and regard the same Real. There is also a status of the Supreme in which no distinction can be made between being and consciousness, — for they are too much one there to be thus differentiated, — but this supreme status of being is also a supreme status of the power of being and therefore of the power of consciousness; for the force of being and the force of its consciousness are one there and cannot be separated: it is this unification of eternal Being with the eternal Consciousness-Force that is the status of the supreme Ishwara, and its force of being is the dynamis of the Absolute. This status is not a negation of cosmos; it carries in itself the essence and power of all cosmic existence.

But still unreality is a fact of cosmic existence, and if all is the Brahman, the Reality, we have to account for this element of unreality in the Real. If the unreal is not a fact of being, it must be an act or a formation of consciousness, and is there not then a status or degree of consciousness in which its acts and formations are wholly or partly unreal? If this unreality cannot be attributed to an original cosmic Illusion, to Maya, there is still in the universe itself a power of illusion of Ignorance. It is

in the power of the Mind to conceive things that are not real, it is in its power even to create things that are not real or not wholly real; its very view of itself and universe is a construction that is not wholly real or wholly unreal. Where does this element of unreality begin and where does it stop, and what is its cause and what ensues on the removal of both the cause and the consequence? Even if all cosmic existence is not in itself unreal, cannot that description be applied to the world of Ignorance in which we live, this world of constant change and birth and death and frustration and suffering, and does not the removal of the Ignorance abolish for us the reality of the world which it creates, or is not a departure out of it the natural and only issue? This would be valid, if our ignorance were a pure ignorance without any element of truth or knowledge in it. But in fact our consciousness is a mixture of the true and the false; its acts and creations are not a pure invention, a baseless structure. The structure it builds, its form of things or form of the universe, is not a mixture of reality and the unreal so much as a half comprehension, a half expression of the real, and, since all consciousness is force and therefore potentially creative, our ignorance has the result of wrong creation, wrong manifestation, wrong action or misconceived and misdirected energy of the being. All world-existence is manifestation, but our ignorance is the agent of a partial, limited and ignorant manifestation, — in part an expression but in part also a disguise of the original being, consciousness and delight of existence. If this state of things is permanent and unalterable, if our world must always move in this circle, if some Ignorance is the cause of all things and all action here and not a condition and circumstance, then indeed the cessation of individual ignorance could only come by an escape of the individual from world-being, and a cessation of the cosmic ignorance would be the destruction of world-being. But if this world has at its root an evolutionary principle, if our ignorance is a half-knowledge evolving towards knowledge, another account and another issue and spiritual result of our existence in material Nature, a greater manifestation here becomes possible.

A farther distinction has to be made in our conceptions of

unreality, so as to avoid a possible confusion in our dealings with this problem of the Ignorance. Our mind, or a part of it, has a pragmatic standard of reality; it insists on a standard of fact, of actuality. All that is fact of existence is to it real, but for it this factuality or reality of the actual is limited to the phenomena of this terrestrial existence in the material universe. But terrestrial or material existence is only a part manifestation, it is a system of actualised possibilities of the Being which does not exclude all other possibilities not yet actualised or not actualised here. In a manifestation in Time new realities can emerge, truths of being not yet realised can put forth their possibilities and become actual in the physical and terrestrial existence; other truths of being there may be that are supraphysical and belong to another domain of manifestation, not realised here but still real. Even what is nowhere actual in any universe, may be a truth of being, a potential of being, and cannot, because it is not yet expressed in form of existence, be taxed as unreal. But our mind or this part of it still insists on its pragmatic habit or conception of the real which admits only the factual and actual as true and is prone to regard all else as unreal. There is then for this mind an unreality which is of a purely pragmatic nature: it consists in the formulation of things which are not necessarily unreal in themselves but are not realised or perhaps cannot be realised by ourselves or in present circumstances or in our actual world of being; this is not a true unreality, it is not an unreal but an unrealised, not an unreal of being but only an unreal of present or known fact. There is, again, an unreality which is conceptual and perceptive and is caused by an erroneous conception and perception of the real: this too is not or need not be an unreality of being, it is only a false construction of consciousness due to limitation by Ignorance. These and other secondary movements of our ignorance are not the heart of the problem, for that turns upon a more general affliction of our consciousness and the world-consciousness here; it is the problem of the cosmic Ignorance. For our whole view and experience of existence labours under a limitation of consciousness which is not ours alone but seems to be at the basis of the material creation. Instead of the original

and ultimate Consciousness which sees reality as a whole, we see active here a limited consciousness and either a partial and unfinished creation or a cosmic kinesis that moves in a perpetual circle of meaningless change. Our consciousness sees a part and parts only of the Manifestation, — if manifestation it be, — and treats it or them as if they were separate entities; all our illusions and errors arise from a limited separative awareness which creates unrealities or misconceives the Real. But the problem becomes still more enigmatic when we perceive that our material world seems to arise directly, not out of any original Being and Consciousness, but out of a status of Inconscience and apparent Non-Existence, our ignorance itself is something that has appeared as if with difficulty and struggle out of the Inconscience.

This then is the mystery, — how did an illimitable consciousness and force of integral being enter into this limitation and separativeness? how could this be possible and, if its possibility has to be admitted, what is its justification in the Real and its significance? It is the mystery not of an original Illusion, but of the origin of the Ignorance and Inconscience and of the relations of Knowledge and Ignorance to the original Consciousness or Superconscience.

CHAPTER VII

The Knowledge and the Ignorance

> Let the Knower distinguish the Knowledge and the Ignorance.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[1]

> Two are there, hidden in the secrecy of the Infinite, the Knowledge and the Ignorance; but perishable is the Ignorance, immortal is the Knowledge; another than they is He who rules over both the Knowledge and the Ignorance.
>
> *Swetaswatara Upanishad.*[2]

> Two Unborn, the Knower and one who knows not, the Lord and one who has not mastery: one Unborn and in her are the object of enjoyment and the enjoyer.
>
> *Swetaswatara Upanishad.*[3]

> Two are joined together, powers of Truth, powers of Maya,— they have built the Child and given him birth and they nourish his growth.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[4]

IN OUR scrutiny of the seven principles of existence it was found that they are one in their essential and fundamental reality: for if even the matter of the most material universe is nothing but a status of being of Spirit made an object of sense, envisaged by the Spirit's own consciousness as the stuff of its forms, much more must the life-force that constitutes itself into form of Matter, and the mind-consciousness that throws itself out as Life, and the Supermind that develops Mind as one of its powers, be nothing but Spirit itself modified in apparent substance and in dynamism of action, not modified in real essence. All are powers of one Power of being and not other than that All-Existence, All-Consciousness, All-Will, All-Delight which is the true truth behind every appearance. And they are not only one in their reality, but also inseparable in the sevenfold variety of their action. They are the seven colours of the light of the divine consciousness, the seven rays of the Infinite, and by them the Spirit has filled in on the canvas of his self-existence conceptually extended, woven of the objective warp

[1] IV. 2. 11. [2] V. 1. [3] I. 9. [4] X. 5. 3.

of Space and the subjective woof of Time, the myriad wonders of his self-creation great, simple, symmetrical in its primal laws and vast framings, infinitely curious and intricate in its variety of forms and actions and the complexities of relation and mutual effect of all upon each and each upon all. These are the seven Words of the ancient sages; by them have been created and in the light of their meaning are worked out and have to be interpreted the developed and developing harmonies of the world we know and the worlds behind of which we have only an indirect knowledge. The Light, the Sound is one; their action is sevenfold.

But here there is a world based upon an original Inconscience; here consciousness has formulated itself in the figure of an ignorance labouring towards knowledge. We have seen that there is no essential reason either in the nature of Being itself or in the original character and fundamental relations of its seven principles for this intrusion of Ignorance, of discord into the harmony, of darkness into the light, of division and limitation into the self-conscious infinity of the divine creation. For we can conceive, and since we can, the Divine can still more conceive, — and since there is the conception, there must somewhere be the execution, the creation actual or intended, — a universal harmony into which these contrary elements do not enter. The Vedic seers were conscious of such a divine self-manifestation and looked on it as the greater world beyond this lesser, a freer and wider plane of consciousness and being, the truth-creation of the Creator which they described as the seat or own home of the Truth, as the vast Truth, or the Truth, the Right, the Vast,[1] or again as a Truth hidden by a Truth where the Sun of Knowledge finishes his journey and unyokes his horses, where the thousand rays of consciousness stand together so that there is That One, the supreme form of the Divine Being. But this world in which we live seemed to them to be a mingled weft in which truth is disfigured by an abundant falsehood, *anṛtasya bhūreḥ*,[2] here the one light has to be born by its own vast force out of an initial darkness or

[1] *sadanam ṛtasya, sve dame ṛtasya, ṛtasya bṛhate, ṛtam satyam bṛhat.*

[2] *Rig Veda*, VII. 60. 5.

sea of Inconscience;[1] immortality and godhead have to be built up out of an existence which is under the yoke of death, ignorance, weakness, suffering and limitation. This self-building they figured as the creation by man in himself of that other world or high ordered harmony of infinite being which already exists perfect and eternal in the Divine Infinite. The lower is for us the first condition of the higher; the darkness is the dense body of the light, the Inconscient guards in itself all the concealed Superconscient, the powers of the division and falsehood hold from us but also for us and to be conquered from them the riches and substance of the unity and the truth in their cave of subconscience. This was in their view, expressed in the highly figured enigmatic language of the early mystics, the sense and justification of man's actual existence and his conscious or unconscious Godward effort, his conception so paradoxical at first sight in a world which seems its very opposite, his aspiration so impossible to a superficial view in a creature so ephemeral, weak, ignorant, limited, towards a plenitude of immortality, knowledge, power, bliss, a divine and imperishable existence.

For, as a matter of fact, while the very keyword of the ideal creation is a plenary self-consciousness and self-possession in the infinite Soul and a perfect oneness, the keyword of the creation of which we have present experience is the very opposite; it is an original inconscience developing in life into a limited and divided self-consciousness, an original inert subjection to the drive of a blind self-existent Force developing in life into a struggle of the self-conscious being to possess himself and all things and to establish in the kingdom of this unseeing mechanic Force the reign of an enlightened Will and Knowledge. And because the blind mechanic Force, — we know now really that it is no such thing, — confronts us everywhere, initial, omnipresent, the fundamental law, the great total energy, and because the only enlightened will we know, our own, appears as a subsequent phenomenon, a result, a partial, subordinate, circumscribed, sporadic energy, the struggle seems to us at the best a very precarious and doubtful venture. The Inconscient to our perceptions is the beginning and the end; the self-conscious soul

[1] *apraketam salilam.*

seems hardly more than a temporary accident, a fragile blossom upon this great, dark and monstrous Ashwattha-tree of the universe. Or if we suppose the soul to be eternal, it appears at least as a foreigner, an alien and not over well-treated guest in the reign of this vast Inconscience. If not an accident in the Inconscient Darkness, it is perhaps a mistake, a stumble downwards of the superconscient Light.

If this view of things had a complete validity, then only the absolute idealist, sent perhaps out of some higher existence, unable to forget his mission, stung into indomitable enthusiasm by a divine oestrus or sustained in a calm and infinite fortitude by the light and force and voice of the unseen Godhead, could persist under such circumstances in holding up before himself, much more before an incredulous or doubting world, the hope of a full success for the human endeavour. Actually, for the most part, men either reject it from the beginning or turn away from it eventually, after some early enthusiasm, as a proved impossibility. The consistent materialist seeks a partial and short-lived power, knowledge, happiness, so much only as the dominant inconscient order of Nature will allow to the struggling self-consciousness of man if he accepts his limitations, obeys her laws and makes as good a use of them by his enlightened will as their inexorable mechanism will tolerate. The religionist seeks his reign of enlightened will, love or divine being, his kingdom of God, in that other world where they are unalloyed and eternal. The philosophic mystic rejects all as a mental illusion and aspires to self-extinction in some Nirvana or else an immersion in the featureless Absolute; if the soul or mind of the illusion-driven individual has dreamed of a divine realisation in this ephemeral world of the Ignorance, it must in the end recognise its mistake and renounce its vain endeavour. But still, since there are these two sides of existence, the ignorance of Nature and the light of the Spirit, and since there is behind them the One Reality, the reconciliation or at any rate the bridging of the gulf forecast in the mystic parables of the Veda ought to be possible. It is a keen sense of this possibility which has taken different shapes and persisted through the centuries, — the perfectibility of man, the perfectibility of society, the Alwar's vision of the descent of

Vishnu and the Gods upon earth, the reign of the saints, *sādhūnām rājyam*, the city of God, the millennium, the new heaven and earth of the Apocalypse. But these intuitions have lacked a basis of assured knowledge and the mind of man has remained swinging between a bright future hope and a grey present certitude. But the grey certitude is not so certain as it looks and a divine life evolving or preparing in earth-Nature need not be a chimera. All acceptations of our defeat or our limitation start from the implied or explicit recognition, first, of an essential dualism and, then, of an irreconcilable opposition between the dual principles, between the Conscient and the Inconscient, between Heaven and Earth, between God and the World, between the limitless One and the limited Many, between the Knowledge and the Ignorance. We have arrived by the train of our reasoning at the conclusion that this need be no more than an error of the sense-mind and the logical intellect founded upon a partial experience. We have seen that there can be and is a perfectly rational basis for the hope of our victory; for the lower term of being in which we now live contains in itself the principle and intention of that which exceeds it and it is by its own self-exceeding and transformation into that that it can find and develop into a complete form its own real essence.

But there is one point in the reasoning which till now we have left somewhat obscure, and it is precisely in this matter of the co-existence of the Knowledge and the Ignorance. Admittedly, we start here from conditions which are the opposite of the ideal divine Truth and all the circumstances of that opposition are founded upon the being's ignorance of himself and of the Self of all, outcome of an original cosmic Ignorance whose result is self-limitation and the founding of life on division in being, division in consciousness, division in will and force, division in the light, division and limitation in knowledge, power, love with, as consequence, the positive opposite phenomena of egoism, obscuration, incapacity, misuse of knowledge and will, disharmony, weakness and suffering. We have found that this Ignorance, although shared by Matter and Life, has its roots in the nature of Mind whose very office it is to measure off, limit, particularise and thereby divide. But Mind also is a universal

principle, is One, is Brahman, and therefore it has a tendency to a unifying and universalising knowledge as well as to that which marks off and particularises. The particularising faculty of Mind only becomes Ignorance when it separates itself from the higher principles of which it is a power and acts not only with its characteristic tendency, but also with a tendency to exclude the rest of knowledge, to particularise first and foremost and always and to leave unity as a vague concept to be approached only afterwards, when particularisation is complete, and through the sum of particulars. This exclusiveness is the very soul of Ignorance.

We must then seize hold on this strange power of Consciousness which is the root of our ills, examine the principle of its operation and detect not only its essential nature and origin, but its power and process of operation and its last end and means of removal. How is it that the Ignorance exists? How has any principle or power in the infinite self-awareness been able to put self-knowledge behind it and exclude all but its own characteristic limited action? Certain thinkers[1] have declared that the problem is insoluble, it is an original mystery and is intrinsically incapable of explanation; only the fact and the process can be stated: or else the question of the nature of the supreme original Existence or Non-existence is put aside as either unanswerable or unnecessary to answer. One can say that Maya with its fundamental principle of ignorance or illusion simply is, and this power of Brahman has the double force of Knowledge and Ignorance inherently potential in it; all we have to do is to recognise the fact and find a means of escape out of the Ignorance, — through the Knowledge, but into what is beyond both Knowledge and Ignorance, — by renunciation of life, by recognition of the universal impermanency of things and the vanity of cosmic existence.

But our mind cannot remain satisfied, — the mind of Bud-

[1] Buddha refused to consider the metaphysical problem; the process by which our unreal individuality is constructed and a world of suffering maintained in existence and the method of escape from it is all that is of importance. Karma is a fact; the construction of objects. of an individuality not truly existent is the cause of suffering: to get rid of Karma, individuality and suffering must be our one objective; by that elimination we shall pass into whatever may be free from these things, permanent, real: the way of liberation alone matters.

dhism itself did not remain satisfied, — with this evasion at the very root of the whole matter. In the first place, these philosophies, while thus putting aside the root question, do actually make far-reaching assertions that assume, not only a certain operation and symptoms, but a certain fundamental nature of the Ignorance from which their prescription of remedies proceeds; and it is obvious that without such a radical diagnosis no prescription of remedies can be anything but an empiric dealing. But if we are to evade the root-question, we have no means of judging whether the assertions advanced are correct or the remedies prescribed the right ones, or whether there are not others which without being so violent, destructively radical or of the nature of a surgical mutilation or extinction of the patient may yet bring a more integral and natural cure. Secondly, it is always the business of man the thinker to know. He may not be able by mental means to know the essentiality of the Ignorance or of anything in the universe in the sense of defining it, because the mind can only know things in that sense by their signs, characters, forms, properties, functionings, relations to other things, not in their occult self-being and essence. But we can pursue farther and farther, clarify more and more accurately our observation of the phenomenal character and operation of the Ignorance until we get the right revealing word, the right indicating sense of the thing and so come to know it, not by intellect but by vision and experience of the truth, by realising the truth in our own being. The whole process of man's highest intellectual knowledge is through this mental manipulation and discrimination to the point where the veil is broken and he can see; at the end spiritual knowledge comes in to help us to become what we see, to enter into the Light in which there is no Ignorance.

It is true that the first origin of the Ignorance is beyond us as mental beings because our intelligence lives and moves within the Ignorance itself and does not reach up to the point or ascend on to the plane where that separation took place of which the individual mind is the result. But this is true of the first origin and fundamental truth of all things, and on this principle we should have to rest satisfied with a general agnosticism. Man has to work in the Ignorance, to learn under its conditions, to know it

up to its farthest point so that he may arrive at its borders where it meets the Truth, touch its final lid of luminous obscuration and develop the faculties which enable him to overstep that powerful but really unsubstantial barrier.

We have then to scrutinise more closely than we have yet done the character and operation of this principle or this power of Ignorance and arrive at a clearer conception of its nature and origin. And first we must fix firmly in our minds what we mean by the word itself. The distinction between the Knowledge and the Ignorance begins with the hymns of the Rig Veda. Here knowledge appears to signify a consciousness of the Truth, the Right, *satyam ṛtam*, and of all that is of the order of the Truth and Right; ignorance is an unconsciousness, *acitti*, of the Truth and Right, an opposition to its workings and a creation of false or adverse workings. Ignorance is the absence of the divine eye of perception which gives us the sight of the supramental Truth; it is the non-perceiving principle in our consciousness as opposed to the truth-perceiving conscious vision and knowledge.[1] In its actual operation this non-perceiving is not an entire inconscience, the inconscient sea from which this world has arisen,[2] but either a limited or a false knowledge, a knowledge based on the division of undivided being, founded upon the fragmentary, the little, opposed to the opulent, vast and luminous completeness of things; it is a cognition which by the opportunity of its limitations is turned into falsehood and supported in that aspect by the Sons of Darkness and Division, enemies of the divine endeavour in man, the assailants, robbers, coverers of his light of knowledge. It was therefore regarded as an undivine Maya,[3] that which creates false mental forms and appearances, — and hence the later significance of this word which seems to have meant originally a formative power of knowledge, the true magic of the supreme Mage, the divine Magician, but was also used for the adverse formative power of a lower knowledge, the deceit, illusion and deluding magic of the Rakshasa. The divine Maya is the knowledge of the Truth of things, its essence, law, operation, which the gods possess and on which they found their own eternal action and creation[4] and their building of their powers

[1] *acitti* and *citti*. [2] *apraketam salilam*. [3] *adevī māyā*. [4] *devānām adabdhā vratāni*.

in the human being. This idea of the Vedic mystics can in a more metaphysical thought and language be translated into the conception that the Ignorance is in its origin a dividing mental knowledge which does not grasp the unity, essence, self-law of things in their one origin and in their universality, but works rather upon divided particulars, separate phenomena, partial relations, as if they were the truth we had to seize or as if they could really be understood at all without going back behind the division to the unity, behind the dispersion to the universality. The Knowledge is that which tends towards unification and, attaining to the supramental faculty, seizes the oneness, the essence, the self-law of existence and views and deals with the multiplicity of things out of that light and plenitude, in some sort as does the Divine Himself from the highest height whence He embraces the world. It must be noted, however, that the Ignorance in this conception of it is still a kind of knowledge, but, because it is limited, it is open at any point to the intrusion of falsehood and error; it turns into a wrong conception of things which stands in opposition to the true Knowledge.

In the Vedantic thought of the Upanishad we find the original Vedic terms replaced by the familiar antinomy of Vidya and Avidya, and with the change of terms there has come a certain development of significance: for since the nature of the Knowledge is to find the Truth and the fundamental Truth is the One, — the Veda speaks repeatedly of it as "That Truth" and "That One", — Vidya, Knowledge in its highest spiritual sense, came to mean purely and trenchantly the knowledge of the One, Avidya, Ignorance, purely and trenchantly the knowledge of the divided Many divorced, as in our world it is divorced, from the unifying consciousness of the One Reality. The complex associations, the rich contents, the luminous penumbra of varied and corollary ideas and significant figures which belonged to the conception of the Vedic words, were largely lost in a language more precise and metaphysical, less psychological and flexible. Still the later exaggerated idea of absolute separation from the true truth of Self and Spirit, of an original illusion, of a consciousness that can be equated with dream or with hallucination, did not at first enter into the Vedantic conception of the Ignorance. If in the

Upanishads it is declared that the man who lives and moves within the Ignorance, wanders about stumbling like a blind man led by the blind and returns ever to the net of Death which is spread wide for him, it is also affirmed elsewhere in the Upanishads that he who follows after the Knowledge only, enters as if into a blinder darkness than he who follows after the Ignorance and that the man who knows Brahman as both the Ignorance and the Knowledge, as both the One and the Many, as both the Becoming and the Non-Becoming, crosses by the Ignorance, by the experience of the Multiplicity, beyond death and by the Knowledge takes possession of Immortality. For the Self-existent has really become these many existences; the Upanishad can say to the Divine Being, in all solemnity and with no thought to mislead, "Thou *art* this old man walking with his staff, yonder boy and girl, this blue-winged bird, that red of eye", not "Thou seemest to be these things" to the self-deluding mind of the Ignorance. The status of becoming is inferior to the status of Being, but still it is the Being that becomes all that is in the universe.

But the development of the separative distinction could not stop here; it had to go to its logical extreme. Since the knowledge of the One is Knowledge and the knowledge of the Many is Ignorance, there can be, in a rigidly analytic and dialectical view, nothing but pure opposition between the things denoted by the two terms; there is no essential unity between them, no reconciliation possible. Therefore Vidya alone is Knowledge, Avidya is pure Ignorance; and, if pure Ignorance takes a positive form, it is because it is not merely a not-knowing of Truth, but a creation of illusions and delusions, of seemingly real unrealities, of temporarily valid falsehoods. Obviously then, the object matter of Avidya can have no true and abiding existence; the Many are an illusion, the world has no real being. Undoubtedly it has a sort of existence while it lasts, as a dream has or the long-continued hallucination of a delirious or a demented brain, but no more. The One has not become and can never become Many; the Self has not and cannot become all these existences; Brahman has not manifested and cannot manifest a real world in itself: it is only the Mind or some principle of which Mind is a result that thrusts names and forms upon the featureless unity which is alone real

and, being essentially featureless, cannot manifest real feature and variation; or else, if it manifests these things, then that is a temporal and temporary reality which vanishes and is convicted of unreality by the illumination of true knowledge.

Our view of the ultimate Reality and of the true nature of Maya has compelled us to depart from these later fine excesses of the dialectical intellect and return to the original Vedantic conception. While giving every tribute to the magnificent fearlessness of these extreme conclusions, to the uncompromising logical force and acuity of these speculations, inexpugnable so long as the premisses are granted, admitting the truth of two of the main contentions, the sole Reality of the Brahman and the fact that our normal conceptions about ourselves and world-existence are stamped with ignorance, are imperfect, are misleading, we are obliged to withdraw from the hold so powerfully laid by this conception of Maya on the intelligence. But the obsession of this long-established view of things cannot be removed altogether so long as we do not fathom the true nature of the Ignorance and the true and total nature of the Knowledge. For if these two are independent, equal and original powers of the Consciousness, then the possibility of a cosmic Illusion pursues us. If Ignorance is the very character of cosmic existence, then our experience of the universe, if not the universe itself, becomes illusory. Or, if Ignorance is not the very grain of our natural being, but still an original and eternal power of Consciousness, then, while there can be a truth of cosmos, it may be impossible for a being in the universe, while he is in it, to know its truth: he can only arrive at real knowledge by passing beyond mind and thought, beyond this world-formation, and viewing all things from above in some supracosmic or supercosmic consciousness like those who have become of one nature with the Eternal and dwell in Him, unborn in the creation and unafflicted by the cataclysmic destruction of the worlds below them.[1] But the solution of this problem cannot be satisfactorily pursued and reached on the basis of an examination of words and ideas or a dialectical discussion; it must be the result of a total observation and penetration of the relevant facts of consciousness, — both

[1] *Gita.*

those of the surface and those below or above our surface level or behind our frontal surface, — and a successful fathoming of their significance.

For the dialectical intellect is not a sufficient judge of essential or spiritual truths; moreover, very often, by its propensity to deal with words and abstract ideas as if they were binding realities, it wears them as chains and does not look freely beyond them to the essential and total facts of our existence. Intellectual statement is an account to our intelligence and a justification by reasoning of a seeing of things which pre-exists in our turn of mind or temperament or in some tendency of our nature and secretly predetermines the very reasoning that claims to lead to it. That reasoning itself can be conclusive only if the perception of things on which it rests is both a true and a whole seeing. Here what we have to see truly and integrally is the nature and validity of our consciousness, the origin and scope of our mentality; for then alone can we know the truth of our being and nature and of world-being and world-nature. Our principle in such an inquiry must be to see and know; the dialectical intellect is to be used only so far as it helps to clarify our arrangement and justify our expression of the vision and the knowledge, but it cannot be allowed to govern our conceptions and exclude truth that does not fall within the rigid frame of its logic. Illusion, knowledge and ignorance are terms or results of our consciousness, and it is only by looking deeply into our consciousness that we can discover and determine the character and relations of the Knowledge and the Ignorance or of the Illusion, if it exists, and the Reality. Being is no doubt the fundamental object of inquiry, things in themselves and things in their nature; but it is only through consciousness that we can approach Being. Or if it be maintained that we can only reach Being, enter into the Real, because it is superconscient, through extinction or transcendence of consciousness or through its self-transcendence and self-transformation, it is still through consciousness that we must arrive at the knowledge of this necessity and the process or power of execution of this extinction or this self-transcendence, this transformation: then, through consciousness, to know of the Superconscient Truth becomes the supreme need

and to discover the power and process of consciousness by which it can pass into superconscience, the supreme discovery.

But in ourselves consciousness seems to be identical with Mind; in any case Mind is so dominant a factor of our being that to examine its fundamental movements is the first necessity. In fact, however, Mind is not the whole of us; there is also in us a life and a body, a subconscience and an inconscience; there is a spiritual entity whose origin and secret truth carry us into an occult inward consciousness and a superconscience. If Mind were all or if the nature of the original Consciousness in things were of the nature of Mind, Illusion or Ignorance might conceivably be regarded as the source of our natural existence: for limitation of knowledge and obscuration of knowledge by Mind-nature create error and illusion, illusions created by Mind-action are among the first facts of our consciousness. It might therefore be conceivably held that Mind is the matrix of an Ignorance which makes us create or represent to ourselves a false world, a world that is nothing more than a subjective construction of the consciousness. Or else Mind might be the matrix in which some original Illusion or Ignorance, Maya or Avidya, cast the seed of a false impermanent universe; Mind would still be the mother, — a "barren mother" since the child would be unreal, — and Maya or Avidya could be looked at as a sort of grandmother of the universe; for Mind itself would be a production or reproduction of Maya. But it is difficult to discern the physiognomy of this obscure and enigmatic ancestress; for we have then to impose a cosmic imagination or an illusion-consciousness on the eternal Reality; Brahman the Reality must itself either be or have or support a constructing Mind or some constructive consciousness greater than Mind but of an analogous nature, must be by its activity or its sanction the creator and even perhaps in some sort by participation a victim, like Mind, of its own illusion and error. It would not be less perplexing if Mind were simply a medium or mirror in which there falls the reflection of an original illusion or a false image or shadow of the Reality. For the origin of this medium of reflection would be inexplicable and the origin also of the false image cast upon it would be inexplicable. An indeterminable Brahman

could only be reflected as something indeterminable, not as a manifold universe. Or if it be the inequality of the reflecting medium, its nature as of rippling and restless water that creates broken images of the Reality, still it would be broken and distorted reflections of the Truth that would appear there, not a pullulation of false names and images of things that had no source or basis of existence in the Reality. There must be some manifold truth of the one Reality which is reflected, however falsely or imperfectly, in the manifold images of the mind's universe. It could then very well be that the world might be a reality and only the mind's construction of it or picture of it erroneous or imperfect. But this would imply that there is a Knowledge, other than our mental thought and perception which is only an attempt at knowing, a true cognition which is aware of the Reality and aware also in it of the truth of a real universe.

For if we found that the highest Reality and an ignorant Mind alone exist, we might have no choice but to admit the Ignorance as an original power of the Brahman and to accept as the source of all things Avidya or Maya. Maya would be an eternal power of the self-aware Brahman to delude itself or rather to delude something that seems to be itself, something created by Maya; Mind would be the ignorant consciousness of a soul that exists only as a part of Maya. Maya would be the Brahman's power to foist name and form upon itself, Mind its power to receive them and take them for realities. Or Maya would be Brahman's power to create illusions knowing them to be illusions, Mind its power to receive illusions forgetting that they are illusions. But if Brahman is essentially and always one in self-awareness, this trick would not be possible. If Brahman can divide itself in that fashion, at once knowing and not knowing or one part knowing and the other not knowing, or even if it can put something of itself into Maya, then Brahman must be capable of a double, — or a manifold, — action of consciousness, one a consciousness of Reality, the other a consciousness of illusion, or one an ignorant consciousness and the other a superconscience. This duality or manifoldness seems at first sight logically impossible, yet it must be on this hypothesis the crucial fact of existence, a spiritual mystery, a suprarational paradox. But once

we admit the origin of things as a suprarational mystery, we can equally or preferably accept this other crucial fact of the One becoming or being always many and the Many being or becoming the One; this too is at first view dialectically impossible, a suprarational paradox, yet it presents itself to us as an eternal fact and law of existence. But if that is accepted, there is then no longer any need for the intervention of an illusive Maya. Or, equally, we can accept, as we have accepted, the conception of an Infinite and Eternal which is capable, by the infinite power of its consciousness, of manifesting the fathomless and illimitable Truth of its being in many aspects and processes, in innumerable expressive forms and movements; these aspects, processes, forms, movements could be regarded as real expressions, real consequences of its infinite Reality; even the Inconscience and Ignorance could then be accepted among them as reverse aspects, as powers of an involved consciousness and a self-limited knowledge brought forward because necessary to a certain movement in Time, a movement of involution and evolution of the Reality. If suprarational in its basis, this total conception is not altogether a paradox; it only demands a change, an enlargement in our conceptions of the Infinite.

But the real world cannot be known and none of these possibilities can be put to the test if we consider Mind alone or only Mind's power for ignorance. Mind has a power also for truth; it opens its thought-chamber to Vidya as well as to Avidya, and if its starting-point is Ignorance, if its passage is through crooked ways of error, still its goal is always Knowledge: there is in it an impulse of truth-seeking, a power, — even though secondary and limited, — of truth-finding and truth-creation. Even if it is only images or representations or abstract expressions of truth that it can show us, still these are in their own manner truth-reflections or truth-formations, and the realities of which they are forms are present in their more concrete truth in some deeper depth or on some higher level of power of our consciousness. Matter and Life may be the form of realities of which Mind touches only an incomplete figure; Spirit may have secret and supernal realities of which Mind is only a partial and rudimentary receiver, transcriber or transmitter. It would then be only by

an examination of other supramental and inframental as well as higher and deeper mental powers of consciousness that we can arrive at the whole reality. And in the end all depends on the truth of the supreme Consciousness — or the Superconscience — that belongs to the highest Reality and the relation to it of Mind, Supermind, Infra-Mind and the Inconscience.

All indeed changes when we penetrate the lower and the higher depths of consciousness and unite them in the one omnipresent Reality. If we take the facts of our and the world's being, we find existence to be one always, — a unity governs even its utmost multiplicity; but the multiplicity is also on the face of things undeniable. We have found unity pursuing us everywhere: even, when we go below the surface, we find that there is no binding dualism; the contradictories and oppositions which the intellect creates exist only as aspects of the original Truth; oneness and multiplicity are poles of the same Reality; the dualities that trouble our consciousness are contrasted truths of one and the same Truth of being. All multiplicity resolves itself into a manifoldness of the one Being, the one Consciousness of Being, the one Delight of Being. Thus in the duality of pleasure and pain, we have seen that pain is a contrary effect of the one delight of existence resulting from the weakness of the recipient, his inability to assimilate the force that meets him, his incapacity to bear the touch of delight that would otherwise be felt in it; it is a perverse reaction of Consciousness to Ananda, not itself a fundamental opposite of Ananda: this is shown by the significant fact that pain can pass into pleasure and pleasure into pain and both resolve into the original Ananda. So too every form of weakness is really a particular working of the one divine Will-Force or the one Cosmic Energy; weakness in that Force means its power to hold back, measure, relate in a particular way its action of Force; incapacity or weakness is the Self's withholding of its force-completeness or an insufficient reaction of Force, not its fundamental opposite. If this is so, then also it may be, and should be in the nature of things, that what we call Ignorance is not really anything else than a power of the one divine Knowledge-Will or Maya; it is the capacity of the One Conscious-

ness similarly to regulate, to hold back, measure, relate in a particular way the action of its Knowledge. Knowledge and Ignorance will then be, not two irreconcilable principles, one creative of world-existence, the other intolerant and destructive of it, but two co-existent powers both present in the universe itself, diversely operating in the conduct of its processes but one in their essence and able to pass by a natural transmutation into each other. But in their fundamental relation Ignorance would not be an equal co-existent, it would be dependent on Knowledge, a limitation or a contrary action of Knowledge.

To know, we have always to dissolve the rigid constructions of the ignorant and self-willed intellect and look freely and flexibly at the facts of existence. Its fundamental fact is consciousness which is power, and we actually see that this power has three ways of operating. First, we find that there is a consciousness behind all, embracing all, within all, which is eternally, universally, absolutely aware of itself whether in unity or multiplicity or in both simultaneously or beyond both in its sheer absolute. This is the plenitude of the supreme divine self-knowledge; it is also the plenitude of the divine all-knowledge. Next, at the other pole of things, we see this consciousness dwelling upon apparent oppositions in itself, and the most extreme antinomy of all reaches its acme in what seems to us to be a complete nescience of itself, an effective, dynamic, creative Inconscience, though we know that this is merely a surface appearance and that the divine Knowledge works with a sovereign security and sureness within the operations of the Inconscient. Between these two oppositions and as a mediary term we see Consciousness working with a partial, limited self-awareness which is equally superficial, for behind it and acting through it is the divine All-Knowledge. Here in its intermediate status, it seems to be a standing compromise between the two opposites, between the supreme Consciousness and the Nescience, but may prove rather in a larger view of our data to be an incomplete emergence of the Knowledge to the surface. This compromise or imperfect emergence we call the Ignorance, from our own point of view, because ignorance is our own characteristic way of the soul's self-withholding of complete

self-knowledge. The origin of these three poises of the power of consciousness and their exact relation is what we have, if possible, to discover.

If we discovered that Ignorance and Knowledge were two independent powers of Consciousness, it might then be that we would have to pursue their difference up to the highest point of Consciousness where they would cease only in an Absolute from which both of them had issued together.[1] It might then be concluded that the only real knowledge is the truth of the superconscient Absolute and that truth of consciousness, truth of cosmos, truth of ourselves in cosmos is at best a partial figure burdened always with a concomitant presence, an encircling penumbra, a pursuing shadow of Ignorance. It might even be that an absolute Knowledge establishing truth, harmony, order and an absolute Inconscience basing a play of fantasy, disharmony and disorder, supporting inexorably its extreme of falsehood, wrong and suffering, a Manichean double principle of conflicting and intermingling light and darkness, good and evil, stand at the root of cosmic existence. The idea of certain thinkers that there is an absolute good but also an absolute evil, both of them an approach to the Absolute, might assume consistence. But if we find that Knowledge and Ignorance are light and shadow of the same consciousness, that the beginning of Ignorance is a limitation of Knowledge, that it is the limitation that opens the door to a subordinate possibility of partial illusion and error, that this possibility takes full body after a purposeful plunge of Knowledge into a material Inconscience but that Knowledge too emerges along with an emerging Consciousness out of the Inconscience, then we can be sure that this fullness of Ignorance is by its own evolution changing back into a limited Knowledge and can feel the assurance that the limitation itself will be removed and the full truth of things become apparent, the cosmic Truth free itself from the cosmic Ignorance. In fact, what is happening is that the Ignorance is seeking and

[1] In the Upanishads Vidya and Avidya are spoken of as eternal in the supreme Brahman; but this can be accepted in the sense of the consciousness of the multiplicity and the consciousness of the Oneness which by co-existence in the supreme self-awareness became the basis of the Manifestation; they would there be two sides of an eternal self-knowledge.

preparing to transform itself by a progressive illumination of its darknesses into the Knowledge that is already concealed within it; the cosmic truth manifested in its real essence and figure would by that transformation reveal itself as essence and figure of the supreme omnipresent Reality. It is from this interpretation of existence that we have started, but to verify it we must observe the structure of our surface consciousness and its relation to what is within it and above and below it; for so best we can distinguish the nature and scope of the Ignorance. In that process there will appear the nature and scope also of that of which the Ignorance is a limitation and deformation, the Knowledge, — in its totality the spiritual being's abiding self-knowledge and world-knowledge.

CHAPTER VIII

Memory, Self-Consciousness and the Ignorance

> Some speak of the self-nature of things, others say that it is Time.
>
> *Swetaswatara Upanishad.*[1]

> Two are the forms of Brahman, Time and the Timeless.
>
> *Maitrayani Upanishad.*[2]

> Night was born and from Night the flowing ocean of being and on the ocean Time was born to whom is subjected every seeing creature.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[3]

> Memory is greater: without memory men could think and know nothing.... As far as goes the movement of Memory, there he ranges at will.
>
> *Chhandogya Upanishad.*[4]

> This is he who is that which sees, touches, hears, smells, tastes, thinks, understands, acts in us, a conscious being, a self of knowledge.
>
> *Prasna Upanishad.*[5]

IN ANY survey of the dual character of our consciousness we have first to look at the Ignorance, — for Ignorance trying to turn into Knowledge is our normal status. To begin with, it is necessary to consider some of the essential movements of this partial awareness of self and things which works in us as a mediator between the complete self-knowledge and all-knowledge and the complete Inconscience, and, from that starting-point, find its relation to the greater Consciousness below our surface. There is a line of thought in which great stress is laid upon the action of memory: it has even been said that Memory is the man, — it is memory that constitutes our personality and holds cemented the foundation of our psychological being; for it links together our experiences and relates them to one and the same individual entity. This is an idea which takes its stand on our existence in the succession of Time and accepts process as the key to essential Truth, even when it does

[1] VI. 1. [2] VI. 15. [3] X. 190. 1, 2. [4] VII. 13. 1, 2. [5] IV. 9.

not regard the whole of existence as process or as cause and effect in the development of some kind of self-regulating Energy, as Karma. But process is merely a utility; it is a habitual adoption of certain effective relations which might in the infinite possibility of things have been arranged otherwise, for the production of effects which might equally have been quite different. The real truth of things lies not in their process, but behind it, in whatever determines, effects or governs the process; not in effectuation so much as in the Will or Power that effects, and not so much in Will or Power as in the Consciousness of which Will is the dynamic form and in the Being of which Power is the dynamic value. But memory is only a process of consciousness, a utility; it cannot be the substance of being or the whole of our personality: it is simply one of the workings of consciousness as radiation is one of the workings of Light. It is Self that is the man: or, if we regard only our normal surface existence, Mind is the man, — for man is the mental being. Memory is only one of the many powers and processes of the Mind, which is at present the chief action of Consciousness-Force in our dealings with self, world and Nature.

Nevertheless, it is as well to begin with this phenomenon of memory when we consider the nature of the Ignorance in which we dwell; for it may give the key to certain important aspects of our conscious existence. We see that there are two applications which the mind makes of its faculty or process of memory, memory of self, memory of experience. First, radically, it applies memory to the fact of our conscious-being and relates that to Time. It says, "I am now, I was in the past, I shall therefore be in the future, it is the same I in all the three ever unstable divisions of Time." Thus it tries to render to itself in the terms of Time an account of that which it feels to be the fact, but cannot know or prove to be true, the eternity of the conscious being. By memory Mind can only know of itself in the past, by direct self-awareness only in the moment of the present, and it is only by extension of and inference from this self-awareness and from the memory which tells us that for some time awareness has been continuously existent that mind can conceive of itself in the future. The extent of the past and

the future it cannot fix; it can only carry back the past to the limit of its memory and infer from the evidence of others and the facts of life it observes around it that the conscious being already was in times which it can no longer remember. It knows that it existed in an infant unreasoning state of the mind to which memory has lost its link; whether it existed before physical birth, the mortal mind owing to the gap of memory cannot determine. Of the future it knows nothing at all; of its existing in the next moment it can only have a moral certainty which some happening of that moment can prove to be an error because what it saw was no more than a dominant probability; much less can it know whether or no physical dissolution is the end of the conscious being. Yet it has this sense of a persistent continuity which easily extends itself into a conviction of eternity.

This conviction may be either the reflection in the mind of an endless past which it has forgotten but of which something in it retains the formless impression, or it may be the shadow of a self-knowledge which comes to the mind from a higher or a deeper plane of our being where we are really aware of our eternal self-existence. Or, conceivably, it might be a hallucination; just as we cannot sense or realise in our foreseeing consciousness the fact of death and can only live in the feeling of continued existence, cessation being to us an intellectual conception we can hold with certainty, even imagine with vividness, but never actually realise because we live only in the present, yet death, cessation or interruption at least of our actual mode of being is a fact and the sense or prevision of continued existence in the future in the physical body becomes beyond a point we cannot now fix a hallucination, a false extension or a misapplication of our present mental impression of conscious being, — so conceivably it might be with this mental idea or impression of conscious eternity. Or it might be a false transference to ourselves of the perception of a real eternity conscient or inconscient other than ourselves, the eternity of the universe or of something which exceeds the universe. The mind seizing this fact of eternity may falsely transfer it to our own conscious being which may be nothing more than a transient phenomenon of that only true eternal.

These questions our surface mind by itself has no means of solving; it can only speculate upon them endlessly and arrive at more or less well-reasoned opinions. The belief in our immortality is only a faith, the belief in our mortality is only a faith. It is impossible for the materialist to prove that our consciousness ends with the death of the body; for he may indeed show that there is as yet no convincing proof that anything in us consciously survives, but equally there is and there can be in the nature of things no proof that our conscious self does not outlast the physical dissolution. Survival of the body by the human personality may hereafter be proved even to the satisfaction of the sceptic; but even then what will be established will only be a greater continuity and not the eternity of the conscious being.

In fact, if we look at the mind's concept of this eternity, we see that it comes only to a continuous succession of moments of being in an eternal Time. Therefore it is Time that is eternal and not the continuously momentary conscious being. But, on the other hand, there is nothing in mind-evidence to show that eternal Time really exists or that Time itself is anything more than the conscious being's way of looking at some uninterrupted continuity or, it may be, eternity of existence as an indivisible flow which it conceptually measures by the successions and simultaneities of the experiences through which alone that existence is represented to it. If there is an eternal Existence which is a conscious being, it must be beyond Time which it contains, timeless as we say; it must be the Eternal of the Vedanta who, we may then conjecture, uses Time only as a conceptual perspective for His view of His self-manifestation. But the timeless self-knowledge of this Eternal is beyond mind; it is a supramental knowledge superconscient to us and only to be acquired by the stilling or transcending of the temporal activity of our conscious mind, by an entry into Silence or a passage through Silence into the consciousness of eternity.

From all this the one great fact emerges that the very nature of our mind is Ignorance; not an absolute nescience, but a limited and conditioned knowledge of being, limited by a realisation of its present, a memory of its past, an inference of its future,

conditioned therefore by a temporal and successive view of itself and its experiences. If real existence is a temporal eternity, then the mind has not the knowledge of real being: for even its own past it loses in the vague of oblivion except for the little that memory holds; it has no possession of its future which is withheld from it in a great blank of ignorance; it has only a knowledge of its present changing from moment to moment in a helpless succession of names, forms, happenings, the march or flux of a cosmic kinesis which is too vast for its control or its comprehension. On the other hand, if real existence is a time-transcending eternity, the mind is still more ignorant of it; for it only knows the little of it that it can itself seize from moment to moment by fragmentary experience of its surface self-manifestation in Time and Space.

If, then, mind is all or if the apparent mind in us is the index of the nature of our being, we can never be anything more than an Ignorance fleeting through Time and catching at knowledge in a most scanty and fragmentary fashion. But if there is a power of self-knowledge beyond mind which is timeless in essence and can look on Time, perhaps with a simultaneous all-relating view of past, present and future, but in any case as a circumstance of its own timeless being, then we have two powers of consciousness, Knowledge and Ignorance, the Vedantic Vidya and Avidya. These two must be, then, either different and unconnected powers, separately born as well as diverse in their action, separately self-existent in an eternal dualism, or else, if there is a connection between them, it must be this that consciousness as Knowledge knows its timeless self and sees Time within itself, while consciousness as Ignorance is a partial and superficial action of the same Knowledge which sees rather itself in Time, veiling itself in its own conception of temporal being, and can only by the removal of the veil return to eternal self-knowledge.

For it would be irrational to suppose that the superconscient Knowledge is so aloof and separate as to be incapable of knowing Time and Space and Causality and their works; for then it would be only another kind of Ignorance, the blindness of the absolute being answering to the blindness of the temporal being as positive pole and negative pole of a conscious existence which

is incapable of knowing all itself, but either knows only itself and does not know its works or knows only its works and does not know itself, — an absurdly symmetrical equipollence in mutual rejection. From the larger point of view, the ancient Vedantic, we must conceive of ourselves not as a dual being, but as one conscious existence with a double phase of consciousness: one of them is conscient or partly conscient in our mind, the other superconscient to mind; one, a knowledge situated in Time, works under its conditions and for that purpose puts its self-knowledge behind it, the other, timeless, works out with mastery and knowledge its own self-determined conditions of Time; one knows itself only by its growth in Time-experience, the other knows its timeless self and consciously manifests itself in Time-experience.

We realise now what the Upanishad meant when it spoke of Brahman as being both the Knowledge and the Ignorance and of the simultaneous knowledge of Brahman in both as the way to immortality. Knowledge is the inherent power of consciousness of the timeless, spaceless, unconditioned Self which shows itself in its essence as a unity of being; it is this consciousness that alone is real and complete knowledge because it is an eternal transcendence which is not only self-aware but holds in itself, manifests, originates, determines, knows the temporally eternal successions of the universe. Ignorance is the consciousness of being in the successions of Time, divided in its knowledge by dwelling in the moment, divided in its conception of self-being by dwelling in the divisions of Space and the relations of circumstance, self-prisoned in the multiple working of the unity. It is called the Ignorance because it has put behind it the knowledge of unity and by that very fact is unable to know truly or completely either itself or the world, either the transcendent or the universal reality. Living within the Ignorance, from moment to moment, from field to field, from relation to relation, the conscious soul stumbles on in the error of a fragmentary knowledge.[1] It is not a nescience, but a view and experience of the

[1] *avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ....janghanyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhāḥ andhenaiva nīyamānāḥ yathāndhāḥ.* "Living and moving within the Ignorance,...they go round and round stumbling and battered, men deluded, like the blind led by one who is blind." — *Mundaka Upanishad,* I. 2. 8.

reality which is partly true and partly false, as all knowledge must be which ignores the essence and sees only fugitive parts of the phenomenon. On the other hand, to be shut up in a featureless consciousness of unity, ignorant of the manifest Brahman, is described as itself also a blind darkness. In truth, neither is precisely darkness, but one is the dazzling by a concentrated Light, the other the illusive proportions of things seen in a dispersed, hazy and broken light, half mist, half seeing. The divine consciousness is not shut up in either, but holds the immutable One and the mutable Many in one eternal all-relating, all-uniting self-knowledge.

Memory, in the dividing consciousness, is a crutch upon which mind supports itself as it stumbles on driven helplessly, without possibility of stay or pause, in the rushing speed of Time. Memory is a poverty-stricken substitute for an integral direct abiding consciousness of self and a direct integral or global perception of things. Mind can only have the direct consciousness of self in the moment of its present being; it can only have some half-direct perception of things as they are offered to it in the present moment of time and the immediate field of space and seized by the senses. It makes up for its deficiency by memory, imagination, thought, idea-symbols of various kinds. Its senses are devices by which it lays hold on the appearances of things in the present moment and in the immediate space; memory, imagination, thought are devices by which it represents to itself, still less directly, the appearances of things beyond the present moment and the immediate space. The one thing which is not a device is its direct self-consciousness in the present moment. Therefore through that it can most easily lay hold on the fact of eternal being, on the reality; all the rest it is tempted, when it considers things narrowly, to look on not merely as phenomenon, but as, possibly, error, ignorance, illusion, because they no longer appear to it directly real. So the Illusionist considers them; the only thing he holds to be truly real is that eternal self which lies behind the mind's direct present self-consciousness. Or else, like the Buddhist, one comes to regard even that eternal self as an illusion, a representation, a subjective image, a mere imagination or false sensation and false idea of being. Mind

becomes to its own view a fantastic magician, its works and itself at once strangely existent and non-existent, a persistent reality and yet a fleeting error which it accounts for or does not account for, but in any case is determined to slay and get done with both itself and its works so that it may rest, may cease in the timeless repose of the Eternal from the vain representation of appearances.

But, in truth, our sharp distinctions made between the without and the within, the present and the past self-consciousness are tricks of the limited unstable action of mind. Behind the mind and using it as its own surface activity there is a stable consciousness in which there is no binding conceptual division between itself in the present and itself in the past and future; and yet it knows itself in Time, in the present, past and future, but at once, with an undivided view which embraces all the mobile experiences of the Time-self and holds them on the foundation of the immobile timeless self. This consciousness we can become aware of when we draw back from the mind and its activities or when these fall silent. But we see first its immobile status, and if we regard only the immobility of the self, we may say of it that it is not only timeless, but actionless, without movement of idea, thought, imagination, memory, will, self-sufficient, self-absorbed and therefore void of all action of the universe. That then becomes alone real to us and the rest a vain symbolising in non-existent forms, — or forms corresponding to nothing truly existent, — and therefore a dream. But this self-absorption is only an act and resultant state of our consciousness, just as much as was the self-dispersion in thought and memory and will. The real self is the eternal who is obviously capable of both the mobility in Time and the immobility basing Time, — simultaneously, otherwise they could not both exist; nor, even, could one exist and the other create seemings. This is the supreme Soul, Self and Being[1] of the Gita who upholds both the immobile and the mobile being as the self and lord of all existence.

So far we arrive by considering mind and memory mainly in regard to the primary phenomenon of mental self-consciousness

[1] *para puruṣa, paramātman, parabrahman.*

in Time. But if we consider them with regard to self-experience as well as consciousness and other-experience as well as self-experience, we shall find that we arrive at the same result with richer contents and a still clearer light on the nature of the Ignorance. At present, let us thus express what we have seen, — an eternal conscious being who supports the mobile action of mind on a stable immobile self-consciousness free from the action of Time and who, while with a knowledge superior to mind he embraces all the movement of Time, dwells by the action of mind in that movement. As the surface mental entity moving from moment to moment, not observing his essential self but only his relation to his experiences of the Time-movement, in that movement keeping the future from himself in what appears to be a blank of Ignorance and non-existence but is an unrealised fullness, grasping knowledge and experience of being in the present, putting it away in the past which again appears to be a blank of Ignorance and non-existence partly lighted, partly saved and stored up by memory, he puts on the aspect of a thing fleeting and uncertain seizing without stability upon things fleeting and uncertain. But in reality, we shall find, he is always the same Eternal who is for ever stable and self-possessed in His supramental knowledge and what he seizes on is also for ever stable and eternal; for it is himself that he is mentally experiencing in the succession of Time.

Time is the great bank of conscious existence turned into values of experience and action: the surface mental being draws upon the past (and the future also) and coins it continually into the present; he accounts for and stores up the gains he has gathered in what we call the past, not knowing how ever-present is the past in us; he uses as much of it as he needs as coin of knowledge and realised being and pays it out as coin of mental, vital and physical action in the commerce of the present which creates to his view the new wealth of the future. Ignorance is a utilisation of the Being's self-knowledge in such a way as to make it valuable for Time-experience and valid for Time-activity; what we do not know is what we have not yet taken up, coined and used in our mental experience or have ceased to coin or use. Behind, all is known and all is ready for use according to the

will of the Self in its dealings with Time and Space and Causality. One might almost say that our surface being is only the deeper eternal Self in us throwing itself out as the adventurer in Time, a gambler and speculator in infinite possibilities, limiting itself to the succession of moments so that it may have all the surprise and delight of the adventure, keeping back its self-knowledge and complete self-being so that it may win again what it seems to have lost, reconquering all itself through the chequered joy and pain of an aeonic passion and seeking and endeavour.

CHAPTER IX

Memory, Ego and Self-Experience

> Here this God, the Mind, in its dream experiences again and again what once was experienced, what has been seen and what has not been seen, what has been heard and what has not been heard; what has been experienced and what has not been experienced, what is and what is not, all it sees, it is all and sees.
>
> *Prasna Upanishad.*[1]

> To dwell in our true being is liberation; the sense of ego is a fall from the truth of our being.
>
> *Mahopanishad.*[2]

> One in many births, a single ocean holder of all streams of movement, sees our hearts.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[3]

THE direct self-consciousness of the mental being, that by which it becomes aware of its own nameless and formless existence behind the flow of a differentiated self-experience, of its eternal soul-substance behind the mental formations of that substance, of its self behind the ego, goes behind mentality to the timelessness of an eternal present; it is that in it which is ever the same and unaffected by the mental distinction of past, present and future. It is also unaffected by the distinctions of space or of circumstance; for if the mental being ordinarily says of itself, "I am in the body, I am here, I am there, I shall be elsewhere", yet when it learns to fix itself in this direct self-consciousness, it very soon perceives that this is the language of its changing self-experience which only expresses the relations of its surface consciousness to the environment and to externalities. Distinguishing these, detaching itself from these, it perceives that the self of which it is directly conscious does not in any way change by these outward changes, but is always the same, unaffected by the mutations of the body or of the mentality or of the field in which these move and act. It is in its essence featureless, relationless, without any other character than that of pure conscious existence self-sufficient and eternally satisfied with pure

[1] IV. 5. [2] V. 2. [3] X. 5. 1.

being, self-blissful. Thus we become aware of the stable Self, the eternal "Am", or rather the immutable "Is" without any category of personality or Time.

But this consciousness of Self, as it is timeless, so is capable also of freely regarding Time as a thing reflected in it and as either the cause or the subjective field of a changing experience. It is then the eternal "I am", the unchanging consciousness on whose surface changes of conscious experience occur in the process of Time. The surface consciousness is constantly adding to its experience or rejecting from its experience, and by every addition it is modified and by every rejection also it is modified; although that deeper self which supports and contains this mutation remains unmodified, the outer or superficial self is constantly developing its experience so that it can never say of itself absolutely, "I am the same that I was a moment ago." Those who live in this surface Time-self and have not the habit of drawing back inward towards the immutable or the capacity of dwelling in it, are even incapable of thinking of themselves apart from this ever self-modifying mental experience. That is for them their self and it is easy for them, if they look with detachment at its happenings, to agree with the conclusion of the Buddhist Nihilists that this self is in fact nothing but a stream of idea and experience and mental action, the persistent flame which is yet never the same flame, and to conclude that there is no such thing as a real self, but only a flow of experience and behind it Nihil: there is experience of knowledge without a Knower, experience of being without an Existent; there are simply a number of elements, parts of a flux without a real whole, which combine to create the illusion of a Knower and Knowledge and the Known, the illusion of an Existent and existence and the experience of existence. Or they can conclude that Time is the only real existence and they themselves are its creatures. This conclusion of an illusory existent in a real or unreal world is as inevitable to this kind of withdrawal as is the opposite conclusion of a real Existence but an illusory world to the thinker who, dwelling on the immobile self, observes everything else as a mutable not-self; he comes eventually to regard the latter as the result of a deluding trick of consciousness.

But let us look a little at this surface consciousness without theorising, studying it only in its facts. We see it first as a purely subjective phenomenon. There is a constant rapid shifting of Time-point which it is impossible to arrest for a moment. There is a constant changing, even when there is no shifting of Space-circumstance, a change both in the body or form of itself which the consciousness directly inhabits and the environing body or form of things in which it less directly lives. It is equally affected by both, though more vividly, because directly, by the smaller than by the larger habitation, by its own body than by the body of the world, because only of the changes in its own body is it directly conscious and of the body of the world only indirectly through the senses and the effects of the macrocosm on the microcosm. This change of the body and the surroundings is not so insistently obvious or not so obviously rapid as the swift mutation of Time; yet it is equally real from moment to moment and equally impossible to arrest. But we see that the mental being only regards all this mutation so far as it produces effects upon its own mental consciousness, generates impressions and changes in its mental experience and mental body, because only through the mind can it be aware of its changing physical habitation and its changing world-experience. Therefore there is, as well as a shifting or change of Time-point and Space-field, a constant modifying change of the sum of circumstances experienced in Time and Space and as the result a constant modification of the mental personality which is the form of our superficial or apparent self. All this change of circumstance is summed up in philosophical language as causality; for in this stream of the cosmic movement the antecedent state seems to be the cause of a subsequent state, or else this subsequent state seems to be the result of a previous action of persons, objects or forces: yet in fact what we call cause may very well be only circumstance. Thus the mind has over and above its direct self-consciousness a more or less indirect mutable self-experience which it divides into two parts, its subjective experience of the ever-modified mental states of its personality and its objective experience of the ever-changing environment which seems partly or wholly to cause and is yet at the same time itself affected by the workings

of that personality. But all this experience is at bottom subjective; for even the objective and external is only known to mind in the form of subjective impressions.

Here the part played by Memory increases greatly in importance; for while all that it can do for the mind with regard to its direct self-consciousness is to remind it that it existed and was the same in the past as in the present, it becomes in our differentiated or surface self-experience an important power linking together past and present experiences, past and present personality, preventing chaos and dissociation and assuring the continuity of the stream in the surface mind. Still even here we must not exaggerate the function of memory or ascribe to it that part of the operations of consciousness which really belongs to the activity of other power-aspects of the mental being. It is not the memory alone which constitutes the ego-sense; memory is only a mediator between the sense-mind and the co-ordinating intelligence: it offers to the intelligence the past data of experience which the mind holds somewhere within but cannot carry with it in its running from moment to moment on the surface.

A little analysis will make this apparent. We have in all functionings of the mentality four elements, the object of mental consciousness, the act of mental consciousness, the occasion and the subject. In the self-experience of the self-observing inner being, the object is always some state or movement or wave of the conscious being, anger, grief or other emotion, hunger or other vital craving, impulse or inner life-reaction or some form of sensation, perception or thought activity. The act is some kind of mental observation and conceptual valuation of this movement or wave or else a mental sensation of it in which observation and valuation may be involved and even lost, — so that in this act the mental person may either separate the act and the object by a distinguishing perception or confuse them together indistinguishably. That is to say, he may either simply become a movement, let us put it, of angry consciousness, not at all standing back from that activity, not reflecting or observing himself, not controlling the feeling or the accompanying action, or he may observe what he becomes and reflect on it, with this seeing or perception in his mind "I am angry". In the former

case the subject or mental person, the act of conscious self-experience and the substantial angry becoming of the mind which is the object of the self-experience, are all rolled up into one wave of conscious-force in movement; but in the latter there is a certain rapid analysis of its constituents and the act of self-experience partly detaches itself from the object. Thus by this act of partial detachment we are able not only to experience ourselves dynamically in the becoming, in the process of movement of conscious-force itself, but to stand back, perceive and observe ourselves and, if the detachment is sufficient, to control our feeling and action, control to some extent our becoming.

However, there is usually a defect even in this act of self-observation; for there is indeed a partial detachment of the act from the object, but not of the mental person from the mental act: the mental person and the mental action are involved or rolled up in each other; nor is the mental person sufficiently detached or separated either from the emotional becoming. I am aware of myself in an angry becoming of my conscious stuff of being and in a thought-perception of this becoming: but all thought-perception also is a becoming and not myself, and this I do not yet sufficiently realise; I am identified with my mental activities or involved in them, not free and separate. I do not yet directly become aware of myself apart from my becomings and my perception of them, apart from the forms of active consciousness which I assume in the waves of the sea of conscious force which is the stuff of my mental and life nature. It is when I entirely detach the mental person from his act of self-experience that I become fully aware first, of the sheer ego and, in the end, of the witness self or the thinking mental Person, the something or someone who becomes angry and observes it but is not limited or determined in his being by the anger or the perception. He is, on the contrary, a constant factor aware of an unlimited succession of conscious movements and conscious experiences of movements and aware of his own being in that succession; but he can be aware of it also behind that succession, supporting it, containing it, always the same in fact of being and force of being beyond the changing forms or arrangements of his conscious force. He is thus the Self that is

immutably and at the same time the Self that becomes eternally in the succession of Time.

It is evident that there are not really two selves, but one conscious being which throws itself up in the waves of conscious force so as to experience itself in a succession of changing movements of itself, by which it is not really changed, increased or diminished, — any more than the original stuff of Matter or Energy in the material world is increased or diminished by the constantly changing combinations of the elements, — although it seems to be changed to the experiencing consciousness so long as it lives only in the knowledge of the phenomenon and does not get back to the knowledge of the original being, substance or Force. When it does get back to that deeper knowledge, it does not condemn the observed phenomenon as unreal, but it perceives an immutable being, energy or real substance not phenomenal, not subject in itself to the senses; it sees at the same time a becoming or real phenomenon of that being, energy or substance. This becoming we call phenomenon because, actually, as things are with us now, it manifests itself to the consciousness under the conditions of sense-perception and sense-relation and not directly to the consciousness itself in its pure and unconditioned embracing and totally comprehending knowledge. So with the Self, — it is, immutably, to our direct self-consciousness; it manifests itself mutably in various becomings to the mind-sense and the mental experience — therefore, as things are with us now, not directly to the pure unconditioned knowledge of the consciousness, but to it under the conditions of our mentality.

It is this succession of experiences and it is this fact of an indirect or secondary action of the experiencing consciousness under the conditions of our mentality that bring in the device of Memory. For a primary condition of our mentality is division by the moments of Time; there is an inability to get its experience or to hold its experiences together except under the conditions of this self-division by the moments of Time. In the immediate mental experience of a wave of becoming, a conscious movement of being, there is no action or need of memory; I become angry, — it is an act of sensation, not of memory; I

observe that I am angry, — it is an act of perception, not of memory. Memory only comes in when I begin to relate my experience to the successions of Time, when I divide my becoming into past, present and future, when I say, "I was angry a moment ago", or "I have become angry and am still in anger", or "I was angry once and will be again if there is the same occasion". Memory may indeed come immediately and directly into the becoming, if the occasion of the movement of consciousness is itself wholly or partly a thing of the past, — for example, if there is a recurrence of emotion, such as grief or anger, caused by memory of past wrong or suffering and not by any immediate occasion in the present or else caused by an immediate occasion reviving the memory of a past occasion. Because we cannot keep the past in us on the surface of the consciousness, — though it is always there behind, within, subliminally present and often even active, — therefore we have to recover it as something that is lost or is no longer existent, and this we do by that repetitive and linking action of the thought-mind which we call memory, — just as we summon things which are not within the actual field of our limited superficial mind-experience by the action of the thought-mind which we call imagination, that greater power in us and high summoner of all possibilities realisable or unrealisable into the field of our ignorance.

Memory is not the essence of persistent or continuous experience even in the succession of Time and would not be necessary at all if our consciousness were of an undivided movement, if it had not to run from moment to moment with a loss of direct grasp on the last and an entire ignorance or non-possession of the next. All experience or substance of becoming in Time is a flowing stream or sea not divided in itself, but only divided in the observing consciousness by the limited movement of the Ignorance which has to leap from moment to moment like a dragon-fly darting about on the surface of the stream: so too all substance of being in Space is a flowing sea not divided in itself, but only divided in the observing consciousness because our sense-faculty is limited in its grasp, can see only a part and is therefore bound to observe forms of substance as if they were separate things in themselves, independent of the one substance.

There is indeed an arrangement of things in Space and Time, but no gap or division except to our ignorance, and it is to bridge the gaps and connect the divisions created by the ignorance of Mind that we call in the aid of various devices of the mind-consciousness, of which memory is only one device.

There is then in me this flowing stream of the world-sea, and anger or grief or any other inner movement can occur as a long-continued wave of the continuous stream. This continuity is not constituted by force of memory, although memory may help to prolong or repeat the wave when by itself it would have died away into the stream; the wave simply occurs and continues as a movement of conscious-force of my being carried forward by its own original impulsion of disturbance. Memory comes in to prolong the disturbance by a recurrence of the thinking mind to the occasion of anger or of the feeling mind to the first impulse of anger by which it justifies itself in a repetition of the disturbance; otherwise the perturbation would spend itself and only recur when the occasion itself was actually repeated. The natural recurrence of the wave, the same or a similar occasion causing the same disturbance, is not any more than its isolated occurrence a result of memory, although memory may help to fortify it and make the mind more subject to it. There is rather the same relation of repeated occasion and repeated result and movement in the more fluid energy and variable substance of mind as that we see presented mechanically by the repetition of the same cause and effect in the less variable operations of the energy and substance of the material world. We may say, if we like, that there is a subconscious memory in all energy of Nature which repeats invariably the same relation of energy and result; but then we enlarge illimitably the connotation of the word. In reality, we can only state a law of repetition in the action of the waves of conscious-force by which it regularises these movements of its own substance. Memory, properly speaking, is merely the device by which the witnessing Mind helps itself to link together these movements and their occurrence and recurrences in the successions of Time for Time-experience, for increasing use by a more and more co-ordinating will and for a constantly developing valuation by a more and

more co-ordinating reason. It is a great, an indispensable but not the only factor in the process by which the Inconscience from which we start develops full self-consciousness, and by which the Ignorance of the mental being develops conscious knowledge of itself in its becomings. This development continues until the co-ordinating mind of knowledge and mind of will are fully able to possess and use all the material of self-experience. Such at least is the process of evolution as we see it governing the development of Mind out of the self-absorbed and apparently mindless energy in the material world.

The ego-sense is another device of mental Ignorance by which the mental being becomes aware of himself, — not only of the objects, occasions and acts of his activity, but of that which experiences them. At first it might seem as if the ego-sense were actually constituted by memory, as if it were memory that told us, "It is the same I who was angry some time ago and am again or still angry now." But, in reality, all that the memory can tell us by its own power is that it is the same limited field of conscious activity in which the same phenomenon has occurred. What happens is that there is a repetition of the mental phenomenon, of that wave of becoming in the mind-substance of which the mind-sense is immediately aware; memory comes in to link these repetitions together and enables the mind-sense to realise that it is the same mind-substance which is taking the same dynamic form and the same mind-sense which is experiencing it. The ego-sense is not a result of memory or built by memory, but already and always there as a point of reference or as something in which the mind-sense concentrates itself so as to have a co-ordinant centre instead of sprawling incoherently all over the field of experience; ego-memory reinforces this concentration and helps to maintain it, but does not constitute it. Possibly, in the lower animal the sense of ego, the sense of individuality would not, if analysed, go much farther than a sensational imprecise or less precise realisation of continuity and identity and separateness from others in the moments of Time. But in man there is in addition a co-ordinating mind of knowledge which, basing itself on the united action of the mind-sense and the memory, arrives at the distinct idea, — while it retains also the

first constant intuitive perception, — of an ego which senses, feels, remembers, thinks, and which is the same whether it remembers or does not remember. This conscious mind-substance, it says, is always that of one and the same conscious person who feels, ceases to feel, remembers, forgets, is superficially conscious, sinks back from superficial consciousness into sleep; he is the same before the organisation of memory and after it, in the infant and in the dotard, in sleep and in waking, in apparent consciousness and apparent unconsciousness; he and no other did the acts which he forgets as well as the acts which he remembers; he is persistently the same behind all changes of his becoming or his personality. This action of knowledge in man, this co-ordinating intelligence, this formulation of self-consciousness and self-experience is higher than the memory-ego and sense-ego of the animal and therefore, we may suppose, nearer to real self-knowledge. We may even come to realise, if we study the veiled as well as the uncovered action of Nature, that all ego-sense, all ego-memory has at its back, is in fact a pragmatic contrivance of a secret co-ordinating power or mind of knowledge, present in the universal conscious-force, of which the reason in man is the overt form at which our evolution arrives, — a form still limited and imperfect in its modes of action and constituting principle. There is a subconscious knowledge even in the Inconscient, a greater intrinsic Reason in things which impose co-ordination, that is to say, a certain rationality, upon the wildest movements of the universal becoming.

The importance of Memory becomes apparent in the well-observed phenomenon of double personality or dissociation of personality in which the same man has two successive or alternating states of his mind and in each remembers and co-ordinates perfectly only what he was or did in that state of mind and not what he was or did in the other. This can be associated with an organised idea of different personality, for he thinks in one state that he is one person and in the other that he is quite another with a different name, life and feelings. Here it would seem that memory is the whole substance of personality. But, on the other side, we must see that dissociation of memory occurs also

without dissociation of personality, as when a man in the state of hypnosis takes up a range of memories and experiences to which his waking mind is a stranger but does not therefore think himself another person, or as when one who has forgotten the past events of his life and perhaps even his name, still does not change his ego-sense and personality. And there is possible too a state of consciousness in which, although there is no gap of memory, yet by a rapid development the whole being feels itself changed in every mental circumstance and the man feels born into a new personality, so that, if it were not for the co-ordinating mind, he would not at all accept his past as belonging to the person he now is, although he remembers perfectly well that it was in the same form of body and same field of mind-substance that it occurred. Mind-sense is the basis, memory the thread on which experiences are strung by the self-experiencing mind: but it is the co-ordinating faculty of mind which, relating together all the material that memory provides and all its linkings of past, present and future, relates them also to an "I" who is the same in all the moments of Time and in spite of all the changes of experience and personality.

The ego-sense is only a preparatory device and a first basis for the development of real self-knowledge in the mental being. Developing from inconscience to self-conscience, from nescience of self and things to knowledge of self and things, the Mind in forms arrives thus far that it is aware of all its superficially conscious becoming as related to an "I" which it always is. That "I" it partly identifies with the conscious becoming, partly thinks of it as something other than the becoming and superior to it, even perhaps eternal and unchanging. In the last resort, by the aid of its reason which distinguishes in order to co-ordinate, it may fix its self-experience on the becoming only, on the constantly changing self and reject the idea of something other than it as a fiction of the mind; there is then no being, only becoming. Or it may fix its self-experience into a direct consciousness of its own eternal being and reject the becoming, even when it is compelled to be aware of it, as a fiction of the mind and the senses or the vanity of a temporary inferior existence.

But it is evident that a self-knowledge based on the separa-

tive ego-sense is imperfect and that no knowledge founded upon it alone or primarily or on a reaction against it can be secure or assured of completeness. First, it is a knowledge of our superficial mental activity and its experiences and, with regard to all the large rest of our becoming that is behind, it is an Ignorance. Secondly, it is a knowledge only of being and becoming as limited to the individual self and its experiences; all the rest of the world is to it not-self, something, that is to say, which it does not realise as part of its own being but as some outside existence presented to its separate consciousness. This happens because it has no direct conscious knowledge of this larger existence and nature such as the individual has of his own being and becoming. Here too there is a limited knowledge asserting itself in the midst of a vast Ignorance. Thirdly, the true relation between the being and the becoming has not been worked out on the basis of perfect self-knowledge but rather by the Ignorance, by a partial knowledge. As a consequence the mind in its impetus towards an ultimate knowledge attempts through the co-ordinating and dissociating will and reason on the basis of our present experience and possibilities to drive at a trenchant conclusion which cuts away one side of existence. All that has been established is that the mental being can on one side absorb himself in direct self-consciousness to the apparent exclusion of all becoming and can on the other side absorb himself in the becoming to the apparent exclusion of all stable self-consciousness. Both sides of the mind, separating as antagonists, condemn what they reject as unreal or else as only a play of the conscious mind; to one or the other, either the Divine, the Self, or the world is only relatively real so long as the mind persists in creating them, the world an effective dream of Self, or God and Self a mental construction or an effective hallucination. The true relation has not been seized, because these two sides of existence must always appear discordant and unreconciled to our intelligence so long as there is only a partial knowledge. An integral knowledge is the aim of the conscious evolution; a clean cut of the consciousness shearing apart one side and leaving the other cannot be the whole truth of self and things. For if some immobile Self were all, there could be no possibility of world-existence; if mobile

Nature were all, there might be a cycle of universal becoming, but no spiritual foundation for the evolution of the Conscient out of the Inconscient and for the persistent aspiration of our partial Consciousness or Ignorance to exceed itself and arrive at the whole conscious Truth of its being and the integral conscious knowledge of all Being.

Our surface existence is only a surface and it is there that there is the full reign of the Ignorance; to know we have to go within ourselves and see with an inner knowledge. All that is formulated on the surface is a small and diminished representation of our secret greater existence. The immobile self in us is found only when the outer mental and vital activities are quieted; for since it is seated deep within and is represented on the surface only by the intuitive sense of self-existence and misrepresented by the mental, vital, physical ego-sense, its truth has to be experienced in the mind's silence. But also the dynamic parts of our surface being are similarly diminished figures of greater things that are there in the depths of our secret nature. The surface memory itself is a fragmentary and ineffective action pulling out details from an inner subliminal memory which receives and records all our world-experience, receives and records even what the mind has not observed, understood or noticed. Our surface imagination is a selection from a vaster more creative and effective subliminal image-building power of consciousness. A mind with immeasurably wider and more subtle perceptions, a life-energy with a greater dynamism, a subtle-physical substance with a larger and finer receptivity are building out of themselves our surface evolution. A psychic entity is there behind these occult activities which is the true support of our individualisation; the ego is only an outward false substitute: for it is this secret soul that supports and holds together our self-experience and world-experience; the mental, vital, physical, external ego is a superficial construction of Nature. It is only when we have seen both our self and our nature as a whole, in the depths as well as on the surface, that we can acquire a true basis of knowledge.

CHAPTER X

Knowledge by Identity and Separative Knowledge

> They see the Self in the Self by the Self.
>
> *Gita.*[1]

> Where there is duality, there other sees other, other hears, touches, thinks of, knows other. But when one sees all as the Self, by what shall one know it? it is by the Self that one knows all this that is.... All betrays him who sees all elsewhere than in the Self; for all this that is is the Brahman, all beings and all this that is are this Self.
>
> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*[2]

> The Self-Existent has pierced the doors of sense outward, therefore one sees things outwardly and sees not in one's inner being. Rarely a sage desiring immortality, his sight turned inward, sees the Self face to face.
>
> *Katha Upanishad.*[3]

> There is no annihilation of the seeing of the seer, the speaking of the speaker... the hearing of the hearer... the knowing of the knower, for they are indestructible; but it is not a second or other than and separate from himself that he sees, speaks to, hears, knows.
>
> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*[4]

OUR surface cognition, our limited and restricted mental way of looking at our self, at our inner movements and at the world outside us and its objects and happenings, is so constituted that it derives in different degrees from a fourfold order of knowledge. The original and fundamental way of knowing, native to the occult self in things, is a knowledge by identity; the second, derivative, is a knowledge by direct contact associated at its roots with a secret knowledge by identity or starting from it, but actually separated from its source and therefore powerful but incomplete in its cognition; the third is a knowledge by separation from the object of observation, but still with a direct contact as its support or even a partial identity; the fourth is a completely separative knowledge which relies on a machinery of

[1] VI. 20. [2] IV. 5. 15, 7. [3] II. 1. 1. [4] IV. 3. 23-30.

ndirect contact, a knowledge by acquisition which is yet, without being conscious of it, a rendering or bringing up of the contents of a pre-existent inner awareness and knowledge. A knowledge by identity, a knowledge by intimate direct contact, a knowledge by separative direct contact, a wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact are the four cognitive methods of Nature.

The first way of knowing in its purest form is illustrated in the surface mind only by our direct awareness of our own essential existence: it is a knowledge empty of any other content than the pure fact of self and being; of nothing else in the world has our surface mind the same kind of awareness. But in the knowledge of the structure and movements of our subjective consciousness some element of awareness by identity does enter; for we can project ourselves with a certain identification into these movements. It has already been noted how this can happen in the case of an uprush of wrath which swallows us up so that for the moment our whole consciousness seems to be a wave of anger: other passions, love, grief, joy have the same power to seize and occupy us; thought also absorbs and occupies, we lose sight of the thinker and become the thought and the thinking. But very ordinarily there is a double movement; a part of our selves becomes the thought or the passion, another part of us either accompanies it with a certain adherence or follows it closely and knows it by an intimate direct contact which falls short of identification or entire self-oblivion in the movement.

This identification is possible, and also this simultaneous separation and partial identification, because these things are becomings of our being, determinations of our mind stuff and mind energy, of our life stuff and life energy; but, since they are only a small part of us, we are not bound to be identified and occupied, — we can detach ourselves, separate the being from its temporary becoming, observe it, control it, sanction or prevent its manifestation: we can, in this way, by an inner detachment, a mental or spiritual separateness, partially or even fundamentally liberate ourselves from the control of mind nature or vital nature over the being and assume the position of the witness, knower and ruler. Thus we have a double knowledge of the subjective movement: there is an intimate knowledge, by

identity, of its stuff and its force of action, more intimate than we could have by any entirely separative and objective knowledge such as we get of things outside us, things that are to us altogether not-self; there is at the same time a knowledge by detached observation, detached but with a power of direct contact, which frees us from engrossment by the Nature-energy and enables us to relate the movement to the rest of our own existence and world existence. If we are without this detachment, we lose our self of being and mastering knowledge in the nature self of becoming and movement and action and, though we know intimately the movement, we do not know it dominatingly and fully. This would not be the case if we carried into our identification with the movement our identity with the rest of our subjective existence, — if, that is to say, we could plunge wholly into the wave of becoming and at the same time be in the very absorption of the state or act the mental witness, observer, controller; but this we cannot easily do, because we live in a divided consciousness in which the vital part of us, — our life nature of force and desire and passion and action, — tends to control or swallow up the mind, and the mind has to avoid this subjection and control the vital, but can only succeed in the effort by keeping itself separate; for if it identifies itself, it is lost and hurried away in the life movement. Nevertheless a kind of balanced double identity by division is possible, though it is not easy to keep the balance; there is a self of thought which observes and permits the passion for the sake of the experience, — or is obliged by some life-stress to permit it, — and there is a self of life which allows itself to be carried along in the movement of Nature. Here, then, in our subjective experience, we have a field of the action of consciousness in which three movements of cognition can meet together, a certain kind of knowledge by identity, a knowledge by direct contact and, dependent upon them, a separative knowledge.

In thought separation of the thinker and the thinking is more difficult. The thinker is plunged and lost in the thought or carried in the thought current, identified with it; it is not usually at the time of or in the very act of thinking that he can observe or review his thoughts, — he has to do that in retrospect and with the aid of memory or by a critical pause of corrective judg-

ment before he proceeds further: but still a simultaneity of thinking and conscious direction of the mind's action can be achieved partially when the thought does not engross, entirely when the thinker acquires the faculty of stepping back into the mental self and standing apart there from the mental energy. Instead of being absorbed in the thought with at most a vague feeling of the process of thinking, we can see the process by a mental vision, watch our thoughts in their origination and movement and, partly by a silent insight, partly by a process of thought upon thought, judge and evaluate them. But whatever the kind of identification, it is to be noted that the knowledge of our internal movements is of a double nature, separation and direct contact: for even when we detach ourselves, this close contact is maintained; our knowledge is always based on a direct touch, on a cognition by direct awareness carrying in it a certain element of identity. The more separative attitude is ordinarily the method of our reason in observing and knowing our inner movements; the more intimate is the method of our dynamic part of mind associating itself with our sensations, feelings and desires: but in this association too the thinking mind can intervene and exercise a separative dissociated observation and control over both the dynamic self-associating part of mind and the vital or physical movement. All the observable movements of our physical being also are known and controlled by us in both these ways, the separative and the intimate; we feel the body and what it is doing intimately as part of us, but the mind is separate from it and can exercise a detached control over its movements. This gives to our normal knowledge of our subjective being and nature, incomplete and largely superficial though it still is, yet, so far as it goes, a certain intimacy, immediacy and directness. That is absent in our knowledge of the world outside us and its movements and objects: for there, since the thing seen or experienced is not-self, not experienced as part of us, no entirely direct contact of consciousness with the object is possible; an instrumentation of sense has to be used which offers us, not immediate intimate knowledge of it, but a figure of it as a first datum for knowledge.

In the cognition of external things, our knowledge has an

entirely separative basis; its whole machinery and process are of the nature of an indirect perception. We do not identify ourselves with external objects, not even with other men though they are beings of our own nature; we cannot enter into their existence as if it were our own, we cannot know them and their movements with the directness, immediateness, intimacy with which we know, — even though incompletely, — ourselves and our movements. But not only identification lacks, direct contact also is absent; there is no direct touch between our consciousness and their consciousness, our substance and their substance, our self of being and their self-being. The only seemingly direct contact with them or direct evidence we have of them is through the senses; sight, hearing, touch seem to initiate some kind of a direct intimacy with the object of knowledge: but this is not so really, not a real directness, a real intimacy, for what we get by our sense is not the inner or intimate touch of the thing itself, but an image of it or a vibration or nerve message in ourselves through which we have to learn to know it. These means are so ineffective, so exiguous in their poverty that, if that were the whole machinery, we could know little or nothing or only achieve a great blur of confusion. But there intervenes a sense-mind intuition which seizes the suggestion of the image or vibration and equates it with the object, a vital intuition which seizes the energy or figure of power of the object through another kind of vibration created by the sense contact, and an intuition of the perceptive mind which at once forms a right idea of the object from all this evidence. Whatever is deficient in the interpretation of the image thus constructed is filled up by the intervention of the reason or the total understanding intelligence. If the first composite intuition were the result of a direct contact or if it summarised the action of a total intuitive mentality master of its perceptions, there would be no need for the intervention of the reason except as a discoverer or organiser of knowledge not conveyed by the sense and its suggestions: it is, on the contrary, an intuition working on an image, a sense document, an indirect evidence, not working upon a direct contact of consciousness with the object. But since the image or vibration is a defective and summary documentation and the intuition itself

limited and communicated through an obscure medium, acting in a blind light, the accuracy of our intuitional interpretative construction of the object is open to question or at least likely to be incomplete. Man has had perforce to develop his reason in order to make up for the deficiencies of his sense instrumentation, the fallibility of his physical mind's perceptions and the paucity of its interpretation of its data.

Our world-knowledge is therefore a difficult structure made up of the imperfect documentation of the sense-image, an intuitional interpretation of it by perceptive mind, life-mind and sense-mind, and a supplementary filling up, correction, addition of supplementary knowledge, co-ordination, by the reason. Even so our knowledge of the world we live in is narrow and imperfect, our interpretations of its significances doubtful: imagination, speculation, reflection, impartial weighing and reasoning, inference, measurement, testing, a further correction and amplification of sense evidence by Science, — all this apparatus had to be called in to complete the incompleteness. After all that the result still remains a half-certain, half-dubious accumulation of acquired indirect knowledge, a mass of significant images and ideative representations, abstract thought-counters, hypotheses, theories, generalisations, but also with all that a mass of doubts and a never-ending debate and inquiry. Power has come with knowledge, but our imperfection of knowledge leaves us without any idea of the true use of the power, even of the aim towards which our utilisation of knowledge and power should be turned and made effective. This is worsened by the imperfection of our self-knowledge which, such as it is, meagre and pitifully insufficient, is of our surface only, of our apparent phenomenal self and nature and not of our true self and the true meaning of our existence. Self-knowledge and self-mastery are wanting in the user, wisdom and right will in his use of world-power and world-knowledge.

It is evident that our state on the surface is indeed a state of knowledge, so far as it goes, but a limited knowledge enveloped and invaded by ignorance and, to a very large extent, by reason of its limitation, itself a kind of ignorance, at best a mixed knowledge-ignorance. It could not be otherwise since our

awareness of the world is born of a separative and surface observation with only an indirect means of cognition at its disposal; our knowledge of ourselves, though more direct, is stultified by its restriction to the surface of our being, by an ignorance of our true self, the true sources of our nature, the true motive-forces of our action. It is quite evident that we know ourselves with only a superficial knowledge, — the sources of our consciousness and thought are a mystery; the true nature of our mind, emotions, sensations is a mystery; our cause of being and our end of being, the significance of our life and its activities are a mystery: this could not be if we had a real self-knowledge and a real world-knowledge.

If we look for the reason of this limitation and imperfection, we shall find first that it is because we are concentrated on our surface; the depths of self, the secrets of our total nature are shut away from us behind a wall created by our externalising consciousness, — or created for it so that it can pursue its activity of egocentric individualisation of the mind, life and body uninvaded by the deeper and wider truth of our larger existence: through this wall we can look into our inner self and reality only through crevices and portholes and we see little there but a mysterious dimness. At the same time our consciousness has to defend its ego-centric individualisation, not only against its own deeper self of oneness and infinity, but against the cosmic infinite; it builds up a wall of division here also and shuts out all that is not centred round its ego, excludes it as the not-self. But since it has to live with this not-self, — for it belongs to it, depends upon it, is an inhabitant within it, — it must maintain some means of communication; it has too to make excursions out of its wall of ego and wall of self-restriction within the body in order to cater for those needs which the not-self can supply to it: it must learn to know in some way all that surrounds it so as to be able to master it and make it as far as possible a servant to the individual and collective human life and ego. The body provides our consciousness with the gates of the senses through which it can establish the necessary communication and means of observation and action upon the world, upon the not-self outside it; the mind uses these means and invents others that supplement

them and it succeeds in establishing some construction, some system of knowledge which serves its immediate purpose or its general will to master partially and use this huge alien environmental existence or deal with it where it cannot master it. But the knowledge it gains is objective; it is mainly a knowledge of the surface of things or of what is just below the surface, pragmatic, limited and insecure. Its defence against the invasion of the cosmic energy is equally insecure and partial: in spite of its notice of no entry without permission, it is subtly and invisibly invaded by the world, enveloped by the not-self and moulded by it; its thought, its will, its emotional and its life energy are penetrated by waves and currents of thought, will, passion, vital impacts, forces of all kinds from others and from universal Nature. Its wall of defence becomes a wall of obscuration which prevents it from knowing all this interaction; it knows only what comes through the gates of sense or through mental perceptions of which it cannot be sure or through what it can infer or build up from its gathered sense-data; all the rest is to it a blank of nescience.

It is, then, this double wall of self-imprisonment, this self-fortification in the bounds of a surface ego, that is the cause of our limited knowledge or ignorance, and if this self-imprisonment were the whole character of our existence, the ignorance would be irremediable. But, in fact, this constant outer ego-building is only a provisional device of the Consciousness-Force in things so that the secret individual, the spirit within, may establish a representative and instrumental formation of itself in physical nature, a provisional individualisation in the nature of the Ignorance, which is all that can at first be done in a world emerging out of a universal Inconscience. Our self-ignorance and our world-ignorance can only grow towards integral self-knowledge and integral world-knowledge in proportion as our limited ego and its half-blind consciousness open to a greater inner existence and consciousness and a true self-being and become aware too of the not-self outside it also as self, — on one side a Nature constituent of our own nature, on the other an Existence which is a boundless continuation of our own self-being. Our being has to break the walls of ego-consciousness

which it has created, it has to extend itself beyond its body and inhabit the body of the universe. In place of its knowledge by indirect contact, or in addition to it, it must arrive at a knowledge by direct contact and proceed to a knowledge by identity. Its limited finite of self has to become a boundless finite and an infinite.

But the first of these two movements, the awakening to our inner realities, imposes itself as the prior necessity because it is by this inward self-finding that the second,—the cosmic self-finding,—can become entirely possible: we have to go into our inner being and learn to live in it and from it; the outer mind and life and body must become for us only an antechamber. All that we are on the outside is indeed conditioned by what is within, occult, in our inner depths and recesses; it is thence that come the secret initiatives, the self-effective formations; our inspirations, our intuitions, our life-motives, our mind's preferences, our will's selections are actuated from there,—in so far as they are not shaped or influenced by an insistence, equally hidden, of a surge of cosmic impacts: but the use we make of these emergent powers and these influences is conditioned, largely determined and, above all, very much limited by our outermost nature. It is then the knowledge of this inner initiating self coupled with the accurate perception of the outer instrumental self and the part played by both of them in our building that we have to discover.

On the surface we know only so much of our self as is formulated there and of even this only a portion; for we see our total surface being in a general vagueness dotted and sectioned by points or figures of precision: even what we discover by a mental introspection is only a sum of sections; the entire figure and sense of our personal formation escapes our notice. But there is also a distorting action which obscures and disfigures even this limited self-knowledge; our self-view is vitiated by the constant impact and intrusion of our outer life-self, our vital being, which seeks always to make the thinking mind its tool and servant: for our vital being is not concerned with self-knowledge but with self-affirmation, desire, ego. It is therefore constantly acting on mind to build for it a mental structure of apparent

self that will serve these purposes; our mind is persuaded to present to us and to others a partly fictitious representative figure of ourselves which supports our self-affirmation, justifies our desires and actions, nourishes our ego. This vital intervention is not indeed always in the direction of self-justification and assertion; it turns sometimes towards self-depreciation and a morbid and exaggerated self-criticism: but this too is an ego-structure, a reverse or negative egoism, a poise or pose of the vital ego. For in this vital ego there is frequently a mixture of the charlatan and mountebank, the poser and actor; it is constantly taking up a role and playing it to itself and to others as its public. An organised self-deception is thus added to an organised self-ignorance; it is only by going within and seeing these things at their source that we can get out of this obscurity and tangle.

For a larger mental being is there within us, a larger inner vital being, even a larger inner subtle-physical being other than our surface body-consciousness, and by entering into this or becoming it, identifying ourselves with it, we can observe the springs of our thoughts and feelings, the sources and motives of our action, the operative energies that build up our surface personality. For we discover and can know the inner being that secretly thinks and perceives in us, the vital being that secretly feels and acts upon life through us, the subtle-physical being that secretly receives and responds to the contacts of things through our body and its organs. Our surface thought, feeling, emotion is a complexity and confusion of impulsions from within and impacts from outside us; our reason, our organising intelligence can impose on it only an imperfect order: but here within we find the separate sources of our mental, our vital and our physical energisms and can see clearly the pure operations, the distinct powers, the composing elements of each and their interplay in a clear light of self-vision. We find that the contradictions and the struggles of our surface consciousness are largely due to the contrary or mutually discordant tendencies of our mental, vital and physical parts opposing and unreconciled with each other and these again to the discord of many different inner possibilities of our being and even of different personalities on each level in us which are behind the intermixed disposition

and differing tendencies of our surface nature. But while on the surface their action is mixed together, confused and conflicting, here in our depths they can be seen and worked upon in their independent and separate nature and action and a harmonisation of them by the mental being in us, leader of the life and body,[1] — or, better, by the central psychic entity, — is not so difficult, provided we have the right psychic and mental will in the endeavour: for if it is with the vital-ego motive that we make the entry into the subliminal being, it may result in serious dangers and disaster or at the least an exaggeration of ego, self-affirmation and desire, an enlarged and more powerful ignorance instead of an enlarged and more powerful knowledge. Moreover, we find in this inner or subliminal being the means of directly distinguishing between what rises from within and what comes to us from outside, from others or from universal Nature, and it becomes possible to exercise a control, a choice, a power of willed reception, rejection and selection, a clear power of self-building and harmonisation which we do not possess or can operate very imperfectly in our composed surface personality but which is the prerogative of our inner Person. For by this entry into the depths the inner being, no longer quite veiled, no longer obliged to exercise a fragmentary influence on its outer instrumental consciousness, is able to formulate itself more luminously in our life in the physical universe.

In its essence the inner being's knowledge has the same elements as the outer mind's surface knowledge, but there is between them the difference between a half blindness and a greater clarity of consciousness and vision due to a more direct and powerful instrumentation and a better arrangement of the elements of knowledge. Knowledge by identity, on the surface a vague inherent sense of our self-existence and a partial identification with our inner movements, can here deepen and enlarge itself from that indistinct essential perception and limited sensation to a clear and direct intrinsic awareness of the whole entity within: we can enter into possession of our whole conscious mental being and life being and arrive at a close intimacy of direct penetrating and enveloping contact with the total move-

[1] *manomayaḥ prāṇaśarīranetā* — *Mundaka Upanishad*, 2. 2. 7.

ments of our mental and vital energy; we meet clearly and closely and are, — but more freely and understandingly, — all the becomings of ourself, the whole self-expression of the Purusha on the present levels of our nature. But also there is or can be along with this intimacy of knowledge a detached observation of the actions of the nature by the Purusha and a great possibility, through this double status of knowledge, of a complete control and understanding. All the movements of the surface being can be seen with a complete detachment, but also with a direct sight in the consciousness by which the self-delusions and mistakes of self of the outer consciousness can be dispelled; there is a keener mental vision, a clearer and more accurate mental feeling of our subjective becoming, a vision which at once knows, commands and controls the whole nature. If the psychic and mental parts in us are strong, the vital comes under mastery and direction to an extent hardly possible to the surface mentality; even the body and the physical energies can be taken up by the inner mind and will and turned into a more plastic instrumentation of the soul, the psychic being. On the other hand, if the mental and psychic parts are weak and the vital strong and unruly, power is increased by entry into the inner vital, but discrimination and detached vision are deficient; the knowledge, even if increased in force and range, remains turbid and misleading; intelligent self-control may give place to a vast undisciplined impetus or a rigidly disciplined but misguided egoistic action. For the subliminal is still a movement of the Knowledge-Ignorance; it has in it a greater knowledge, but the possibility also of a greater because more self-affirming ignorance. This is because, though an increased self-knowledge is normal here, it is not at once an integral knowledge: an awareness by direct contact, which is the principal power of the subliminal, is not sufficient for that; for it may be contact with greater becomings and powers of Knowledge, but also with greater becomings and powers of the Ignorance.

But the subliminal being has also a larger direct contact with the world; it is not confined like the surface Mind to the interpretation of sense-images and sense-vibrations supplemented by the mental and vital intuition and the reason. There is indeed an inner sense in the subliminal nature, a subtle sense of vision,

hearing, touch, smell and taste; but these are not confined to the creation of images of things belonging to the physical environment, — they can present to the consciousness visual, auditory, tactual and other images and vibrations of things beyond the restricted range of the physical senses or belonging to other planes or spheres of existence. This inner sense can create or present images, scenes, sounds that are symbolic rather than actual or that represent possibilities in formation, suggestions, thoughts, ideas, intentions of other beings, image-forms also of powers or potentialities in universal Nature; there is nothing that it cannot image or visualise or turn into sensory formations. It is the subliminal in reality and not the outer mind that possesses the powers of telepathy, clairvoyance, second sight and other supernormal faculties whose occurrence in the surface consciousness is due to openings or rifts in the wall erected by the outer personality's unseeing labour of individualisation and interposed between itself and the inner domain of our being. It should be noted, however, that owing to this complexity the action of the subliminal sense can be confusing or misleading, especially if it is interpreted by the outer mind to which the secret of its operations is unknown and its principles of sign-construction and symbolic figure-languages foreign; a greater inner power of intuition, tact, discrimination is needed to judge and interpret rightly its images and experiences. It is still the fact that they add immensely to our possible scope of knowledge and widen the narrow limits in which our sense-bound outer physical consciousness is circumscribed and imprisoned.

But more important is the power of the subliminal to enter into a direct contact of consciousness with other consciousness or with objects, to act without other instrumentation, by an essential sense inherent in its own substance, by a direct mental vision, by a direct feeling of things, even by a close envelopment and intimate penetration and a return with the contents of what is enveloped or penetrated, by a direct intimation or impact on the substance of mind itself, not through outward signs or figures, — a revealing intimation or a self-communicating impact of thoughts, feelings, forces. It is by these means that the inner being achieves an immediate, intimate and accurate spontaneous

knowledge of persons, of objects, of the occult and to us intangible energies of world-Nature that surround us and impinge upon our own personality, physicality, mind-force and life-force. In our surface mentality we are sometimes aware of a consciousness that can feel or know the thoughts and inner reactions of others or become aware of objects or happenings without any observable sense-intervention or otherwise exercise powers supernormal to our ordinary capacity; but these capacities are occasional, rudimentary, vague. Their possession is proper to our concealed subliminal self and, when they emerge, it is by a coming to the surface of its powers or operations. These emergent operations of the subliminal being or some of them are now fragmentarily studied under the name of psychic phenomena, — although they have ordinarily nothing to do with the *psyche*, the soul, the inmost entity in us, but only with the inner mind, the inner vital, the subtle-physical parts of our subliminal being; but the results cannot be conclusive or sufficiently ample because they are sought for by methods of inquiry and experiment and standards of proof proper to the surface mind and its system of knowledge by indirect contact. Under these conditions they can be investigated only in so far as they are able to manifest in that mind to which they are exceptional, abnormal or supernormal, and therefore comparatively rare, difficult, incomplete in their occurrence. It is only if we can open up the wall between the outer mind and the inner consciousness to which such phenomena are normal, or if we can enter freely within or dwell there, that this realm of knowledge can be truly explained and annexed to our total consciousness and included in the field of operation of our awakened force of nature.

In our surface mind we have no direct means of knowing even other men who are of our own kind and have a similar mentality and are vitally and physically built on the same model. We can acquire a general knowledge of the human mind and the human body and apply it to them with the aid of the many constant and habitual outer signs of the human inner movements with which we are familiar; these summary judgments can be farther eked out by our experience of personal character and habits, by instinctive application of what self-knowledge we have

to our understanding and judgment of others, by inference from speech and conduct, by insight of observation and insight of sympathy. But the results are always incomplete and very frequently deceptive: our inferences are as often as not erroneous constructions, our interpretation of the outward signs a mistaken guess-work, our application of general knowledge or our self-knowledge baffled by elusive factors of personal difference, our very insight uncertain and unreliable. Human beings therefore live as strangers to each other, at best tied by a very partial sympathy and mutual experience; we do not know enough, do not know as well as we know ourselves,—and that itself is little,—even those nearest to us. But in the subliminal inner consciousness it is possible to become directly aware of the thoughts and feelings around us, to feel their impact, to see their movements; to read a mind and a heart becomes less difficult, a less uncertain venture. There is a constant mental, vital, subtle-physical interchange going on between all who meet or live together, of which they are themselves unaware except in so far as its impacts and interpenetrations touch them as sensible results of speech and action and outer contact: for the most part it is subtly and invisibly that this interchange takes place; for it acts indirectly, touching the subliminal parts and through them the outer nature. But when we grow conscious in these subliminal parts, that brings consciousness also of all this interaction and subjective interchange and intermingling, with the result that we need no longer be involuntary subjects of their impact and consequence, but can accept or reject, defend ourselves or isolate. At the same time, our action on others need no longer be ignorant or involuntary and often unintentionally harmful; it can be a conscious help, a luminous interchange and a fruitful accommodation, an approach towards an inner understanding or union, not as now a separative association with only a limited intimacy or unity, restricted by much non-understanding and often burdened or endangered by a mass of misunderstanding, of mutual misinterpretation and error.

Equally important would be the change in our dealings with the impersonal forces of the world that surround us. These we know only by their results, by the little that we can seize of their

visible action and consequence. Among them it is mostly the physical world-forces of which we have some knowledge, but we live constantly in the midst of a whirl of unseen mind-forces and life-forces of which we know nothing, we are not even aware of their existence. To all this unseen movement and action the subliminal inner consciousness can open our awareness, for it has a knowledge of it by direct contact, by inner vision, by a psychic sensitiveness; but at present it can only enlighten our obtuse superficiality and outwardness by unexplained warnings, premonitions, attractions and repulsions, ideas, suggestions, obscure intuitions, the little it can get through imperfectly to the surface. The inner being not only contacts directly and concretely the immediate motive and movement of these universal forces and feels the results of their present action, but it can to a certain extent forecast or see ahead their farther action; there is a greater power in our subliminal parts to overcome the time barrier, to have the sense or feel the vibration of coming events, of distant happenings, even to look into the future. It is true that this knowledge proper to the subliminal being is not complete; for it is a mixture of knowledge and ignorance and it is capable of erroneous as well as of true perception, since it works not by knowledge by identity, but by a knowledge through direct contact and this is also a separative knowledge, though more intimate even in separation than anything that is commanded by our surface nature. But the mixed capacity of the inner mental and vital nature for a greater ignorance as well as a greater knowledge can be cured by going still deeper behind it to the psychic entity which supports our individual life and body. There is indeed a soul-personality, representative of this entity, already built up within us, which puts forward a fine psychic element in our natural being: but this finer factor in our normal make-up is not yet dominant and has only a limited action. Our soul is not the overt guide and master of our thought and acts; it has to rely on the mental, vital, physical instruments for self-expression and is constantly overpowered by our mind and life-force: but if once it can succeed in remaining in constant communion with its own larger occult reality, — and this can only happen when we go deep into our subliminal parts, — it is no longer depen-

dent, it can become powerful and sovereign, armed with an intrinsic spiritual perception of the truth of things and a spontaneous discernment which separates that truth from the falsehood of the Ignorance and Inconscience, distinguishes the divine and the undivine in the manifestation and so can be the luminous leader of our other parts of nature. It is indeed when this happens that there can be the turning-point towards an integral transformation and an integral knowledge.

These are the dynamic functionings and pragmatic values of the subliminal cognition; but what concerns us in our present inquiry is to learn from its way of action the exact character of this deeper and larger cognition and how it is related to true knowledge. Its main character is a knowledge by the direct contact of consciousness with its object or of consciousness with other consciousness; but in the end we discover that this power is an outcome of a secret knowledge by identity, a translation of it into a separative awareness of things. For as in the indirect contact proper to our normal consciousness and surface cognition it is the meeting or friction of the living being with the existence outside it that awakens the spark of conscious knowledge, so here it is some contact that sets in action a pre-existent secret knowledge and brings it to the surface. For consciousness is one in the subject and the object, and in the contact of existence with existence this identity brings to light or awakens in the self the dormant knowledge of this other self outside it. But while this pre-existent knowledge comes up in the surface mind as a knowledge acquired, it arises in the subliminal as a thing seen, caught from within, remembered as it were, or, when it is fully intuitive, self-evident to the inner awareness; or it is taken in from the object contacted but with an immediate response as to something intimately recognisable. In the surface consciousness knowledge represents itself as a truth seen from outside, thrown on us from the object, or as a response to its touch on the sense, a perceptive reproduction of its objective actuality. Our surface mind is obliged to give to itself this account of its knowledge, because the wall between itself and the outside world is pierced by the gates of sense and it can catch through these gates the surface of outward objects though not what is within them, but

there is no such ready-made opening between itself and its own inner being: since it is unable to see what is within its deeper self or observe the process of the knowledge coming from within, it has no choice but to accept what it does see, the external object, as the cause of its knowledge. Thus all our mental knowing of things represents itself to us as objective, a truth imposed on us from outside; our knowledge is a reflection or responsive construction reproducing in us a figure or picture or a mental scheme of something that is not in our own being. In fact, it is a hidden deeper response to the contact, a response coming from within that throws up from there an inner knowledge of the object, the object being itself part of our larger self; but owing to the double veil, the veil between our inner self and our ignorant surface self and the veil between that surface self and the object contacted, it is only an imperfect figure or representation of the inner knowledge that is formed on the surface.

This affiliation, this concealed method of our knowledge, obscure and non-evident to our present mentality, becomes clear and evident when the subliminal inner being breaks its boundaries of individuality and, carrying our surface mind with it, enters into the cosmic consciousness. The subliminal is separated from the cosmic through a limitation by the subtler sheaths of our being, its mental, vital, subtle-physical sheaths, just as the surface nature is separated from universal Nature by the gross physical sheath, the body; but the circumscribing wall around it is more transparent, is indeed less a wall than a fence. The subliminal has besides a formation of consciousness which projects itself beyond all these sheaths and forms a circumconscient, an environing part of itself, through which it receives the contacts of the world and can become aware of them and deal with them before they enter. The subliminal is able to widen indefinitely this circumconscient envelope and more and more enlarge its self-projection into the cosmic existence around it. A point comes where it can break through the separation altogether, unite, identify itself with cosmic being, feel itself universal, one with all existence. In this freedom of entry into cosmic self and cosmic nature there is a great liberation of the individual being; it puts on a cosmic consciousness, becomes the universal indi-

vidual. Its first result, when it is complete, is the realisation of the cosmic spirit, the one self inhabiting the universe, and this union may even bring about a disappearance of the sense of individuality, a merger of the ego into the world-being. Another common result is an entire openness to the universal Energy so that it is felt acting through the mind and life and body and the sense of individual action ceases. But more usually there are results of less amplitude; there is a direct awareness of universal being and nature, there is a greater openness of the mind to the cosmic Mind and its energies, to the cosmic Life and its energies, to cosmic Matter and its energies. A certain sense of unity of the individual with the cosmic, a perception of the world held within one's consciousness as well as of one's own intimate inclusion in the world consciousness can become frequent or constant in this opening; a greater feeling of unity with other beings is its natural consequence. It is then that the existence of the cosmic Being becomes a certitude and a reality and is no longer an ideative perception.

But the cosmic consciousness of things is founded upon knowledge by identity; for the universal Spirit knows itself as the Self of all, knows all as itself and in itself, knows all nature as part of its nature. It is one with all that it contains and knows it by that identity and by a containing nearness; for there is at the same time an identity and an exceeding, and, while from the point of view of the identification there is a oneness and complete knowledge, so from the point of view of the exceeding there is an inclusion and a penetration, an enveloping cognition of each thing and all things, a penetrating sense and vision of each thing and all things. For the cosmic Spirit inhabits each and all, but is more than all; there is therefore in its self-view and world-view a separative power which prevents the cosmic consciousness from being imprisoned in the objects and beings in which it dwells: it dwells within them as an all-pervading spirit and power; whatever individualisation takes place is proper to the person or object, but is not binding on the cosmic Being. It becomes each thing without ceasing from its own larger all-containing existence. Here then is a large universal identity containing smaller identities; for whatever separative cognition

exists in or enters into the cosmic consciousness must stand on this double identity and does not contradict it. If there is any need of a drawing back and a knowledge by separation plus contact, it is yet a separateness in identity, a contact in identity; for the object contained is part of the self of that which contains it. It is only when a more drastic separativeness intervenes, that the identity veils itself and throws up a lesser knowledge, direct or indirect, which is unaware of its source; yet is it always the sea of identity which throws up to the surface the waves or the spray of a direct or an indirect knowledge.

This is on the side of consciousness; on the side of action, of the cosmic energies, it is seen that they move in masses, waves, currents constantly constituting and reconstituting beings and objects, movements and happenings, entering into them, passing through them, forming themselves in them, throwing themselves out from them on other beings and objects. Each natural individual is a receptacle of these cosmic forces and a dynamo for their propagation; there passes from each to each a constant stream of mental and vital energies, and these run too in cosmic waves and currents no less than the forces of physical Nature. All this action is veiled from our surface mind's direct sense and knowledge, but it is known and felt by the inner being, though only through a direct contact; when the being enters into the cosmic consciousness, it is still more widely, inclusively, intimately aware of this play of cosmic forces. But although the knowledge is then more complete, the dynamisation of this knowledge can only be partial; for while a fundamental or static unification with the cosmic self is possible, the active dynamic unification with cosmic Nature must be incomplete. On the level of mind and life, even with the loss of the sense of a separate self-existence, the energisms must be in their very nature a selection through individualisation; the action is that of the cosmic Energy, but the individual formation of it in the living dynamo remains the method of its working. For the very use of the dynamo of individuality is to select, to concentrate and formulate selected energies and throw them out in formed and canalised currents: the flow of a total energy would mean that this dynamo had no further use, could be abolished or put

out of action; instead of an activity of individual mind, life, body there would be only an individual but impersonal centre or channel through which the universal forces would flow unimpeded and unselective. This can happen, but it would imply a higher spiritualisation far exceeding the normal mental level. In the static seizure of the cosmic knowledge by identity, the subliminal universalised may feel itself one with the cosmic self and the secret self of all others: but the dynamisation of that knowledge would not go farther than a translation of this sense of identity into a greater power and intimacy of direct contact of consciousness with all, a greater, more intimate, more powerful and efficient impact of the force of consciousness on things and persons, a capacity too of an effective inclusion and penetration, of a dynamised intimate vision and feeling and other powers of cognition and action proper to this larger nature.

In the subliminal, therefore, even enlarged into the cosmic consciousness, we get a greater knowledge but not the complete and original knowledge. To go farther and see what the knowledge by identity is in its purity and in what way and to what extent it originates, admits or uses the other powers of knowledge, we have to go beyond the inner mind and life and subtle-physical to the two other ends of the subliminal, interrogate the subconscient and contact or enter into the superconscient. But in the subconscient all is blind, an obscure universalism such as is seen in the mass consciousness, an obscure individualism either abnormal to us or ill-formed and instinctive: here, in the subconscient, a dark knowledge by identity, such as we find already in the Inconscience, is the basis, but it does not reveal itself and its secret. The superior superconscient ranges are based upon the spiritual consciousness free and luminous, and it is there that we can trace the original power of knowledge and perceive the origin and difference of the two distinct orders, knowledge by identity and separative knowledge.

In the supreme timeless Existence, as far as we know it by reflection in spiritual experience, existence and consciousness are one. We are accustomed to identify consciousness with certain operations of mentality and sense and, where these are absent or quiescent, we speak of that state of being as uncon-

scious. But consciousness can exist where there are no overt operations, no signs revealing it, even where it is withdrawn from objects and absorbed in pure existence or involved in the appearance of non-existence. It is intrinsic in being, self-existent, not abolished by quiescence, by inaction, by veiling or covering, by inert absorption or involution; it is there in the being, even when its state seems to be dreamless sleep or a blind trance or an annulment of awareness or an absence. In the supreme timeless status where consciousness is one with being and immobile, it is not a separate reality, but simply and purely the self-awareness inherent in existence. There is no need of knowledge nor is there any operation of knowledge. Being is self-evident to itself: it does not need to look at itself in order to know itself or learn that it is. But if this is evidently true of pure existence, it is also true of the primal All-Existence; for just as spiritual Self-existence is intrinsically aware of its self, so it is intrinsically aware of all that is in its being: this is not by an act of knowledge formulated in a self-regard, a self-observation, but by the same inherent awareness; it is intrinsically all-conscious of all that is by the very fact that all is itself. Thus conscious of its timeless self-existence, the Spirit, the Being is aware in the same way, —intrinsically, absolutely, totally, without any need of a look or act of knowledge, because it is all, — of Time-Existence and of all that is in Time. This is the essential awareness by identity; if applied to cosmic existence, it would mean an essential self-evident automatic consciousness of universe by the Spirit because it is everything and everything is its being.

But there is another status of spiritual awareness which seems to us to be a development from this state and power of pure self-consciousness, perhaps even a first departure, but is in fact normal and intimate to it; for the awareness by identity is always the very stuff of all the Spirit's self-knowledge, but it admits within itself, without changing or modifying its own eternal nature, a subordinate and simultaneous awareness by inclusion and by indwelling. The Being, the Self-existent sees all existences in its one existence; it contains them all and knows them as being of its being, consciousness of its consciousness, power of its power, bliss of its bliss; it is at the same time, necessarily, the

Self in them and knows all in them by its pervadingly indwelling selfness: but still all this awareness exists intrinsically, self-evidently, automatically, without the need of any act, regard or operation of knowledge; for knowledge here is not an act, but a state pure, perpetual and inherent. At the base of all spiritual knowledge is this consciousness of identity and by identity, which knows or is simply aware of all as itself. Translated into our way of consciousness this becomes the triple knowledge thus formulated in the Upanishad, "He who sees all existences in the Self", "He who sees the Self in all existences", "He in whom the Self has become all existences", — inclusion, indwelling and identity: but in the fundamental consciousness this seeing is a spiritual self-sense, a seeing that is self-light of being, not a separative regard or a regard upon self turning that self into object. But in this fundamental self-experience a regard of consciousness can manifest which, though inherently possible, an inevitably self-contained power of spirit, is not a first active element of the absorbed intrinsic self-luminousness and self-evidence of the supreme consciousness. This regard belongs to or brings in another status of the supreme spiritual consciousness, a status in which knowledge as we know it begins; there is a state of consciousness and in it, intimate to it there is an act of knowing: the Spirit regards itself, it becomes the knower and the known, in a way the subject and object, — or rather the subject-object in one, — of its own self-knowledge. But this regard, this knowledge is still intrinsic, still self-evident, an act of identity; there is no beginning of what we experience as separative knowledge.

But when the subject draws a little back from itself as object, then certain tertiary powers of spiritual knowledge, of knowledge by identity, take their first origin. There is a spiritual intimate vision, a spiritual pervasive entry and penetration, a spiritual feeling in which one sees all as oneself, feels all as oneself, contacts all as oneself. There is a power of spiritual perception of the object and all that it contains or is, perceived in an enveloping and pervading identity, the identity itself constituting the perception. There is a spiritual conception that is the original substance of thought, not the thought that discovers the unknown, but that which brings out the intrinsically known from oneself

and places it in self-space, in an extended being of self-awareness, as an object of conceptual self-knowledge. There is a spiritual emotion, a spiritual sense, there is an intermingling of oneness with oneness, of being with being, of consciousness with consciousness, of delight of being with delight of being. There is a joy of intimate separateness in identity, of relations of love joined with love in a supreme unity, a delight of the many powers, truths, beings of the eternal oneness, of the forms of the Formless; all the play of the becoming in the being founds its self-expression upon these powers of the consciousness of the Spirit. But in their spiritual origin all these powers are essential, not instrumental, not organised, devised or created; they are the luminous self-aware substance of the spiritual Identical made active on itself and in itself, spirit made sight, spirit vibrant as feeling, spirit self-luminous as perception and conception. All is in fact the knowledge by identity, self-powered, self-moving in its multitudinous selfhood of one-awareness. The Spirit's infinite self-experience moves between sheer identity and a multiple identity, a delight of intimately differentiated oneness and an absorbed self-rapture.

A separative knowledge arises when the sense of differentiation overpowers the sense of identity; the self still cognises its identity with the object but pushes to its extreme the play of intimate separateness. At first there is not a sense of self and not-self, but only of self and other-self. A certain knowledge of identity and by identity is still there, but it tends to be first over-structured, then submerged, then so replaced by knowledge through interchange and contact that it figures as a secondary awareness, as if it were a result and no longer the cause of the mutual contact, the still pervasive and enveloping touch, the interpenetrating intimacy of the separate selves. Finally, identity disappears behind the veil and there is the play of being with other beings, consciousness with other consciousness: an underlying identity is still there, but it is not experienced; its place is taken by a direct seizing and penetrating contact, intermingling, interchange. It is by this interaction that a more or less intimate knowledge, mutual awareness or awareness of the object remains possible. There is no feeling of self meeting self, but there is a

mutuality; there is not yet an entire separateness, a complete otherness and ignorance. This is a diminished consciousness, but it retains some power of the original knowledge curtailed by division, by the loss of its primal and essential completeness, operating by division, effecting closeness but not oneness. The power of inclusion of the object in the consciousness, of an enveloping awareness and knowledge is there; but it is the inclusion of a now externalised existence which has to be made an element of our self by an attained or recovered knowledge, by a dwelling of consciousness upon the object, a concentration, a taking possession of it as part of the existence. The power of penetration is there, but it has no natural pervasiveness and does not lead to identity; it gathers what it can, takes what is thus acquired and carries the contents of the object of knowledge to the subject. There can still be a direct and penetrating contact of consciousness with consciousness creating a vivid and intimate knowledge, but it is confined to the points or to the extent of the contact. There is still a direct sense, consciousness-sight, consciousness-feeling which can see and feel what is within the object as well as its outside and surface. There is still a mutual penetration and interchange between being and being, between consciousness and consciousness, waves of thought, of feeling, of energy of all kinds which may be a movement of sympathy and union or of opposition and struggle. There can be an attempt at unification by possession of others or through one's own acceptance of possession by other consciousness or other being; or there can be a push towards union by reciprocal inclusion, pervasion, mutual possession. Of all this action and interaction the knower by direct contact is aware and it is on this basis that he arranges his relations with the world around him. This is the origin of knowledge by direct contact of consciousness with its object, which is normal to our inner being but foreign or only imperfectly known to our surface nature.

This first separative ignorance is evidently still a play of knowledge but of a limited separative knowledge, a play of divided being working upon a reality of underlying unity and arriving only at an imperfect result or outcome of the concealed oneness. The complete intrinsic awareness of identity and the act

of knowledge by identity belong to the higher hemisphere of existence: this knowledge by direct contact is the main character of the highest supraphysical mental planes of consciousness, those to which our surface being is closed in by a wall of ignorance; in a diminished and more separative form it is a property of the lesser supraphysical planes of mind; it is or can be an element in all that is supraphysical. It is the main instrumentation of our subliminal self, its central means of awareness; for the subliminal self or inner being is a projection from these higher planes to meet the subconscience and it inherits the character of consciousness of its planes of origin with which it is intimately associated and in touch by kinship. In our outer being we are children of the Inconscience; our inner being makes us inheritors of the higher heights of mind and life and spirit: the more we open inwards, go inwards, live inwards, receive from within, the more we draw away from subjection to our inconscient origin and move towards all which is now superconscient to our ignorance.

Ignorance becomes complete with the entire separation of being from being: the direct contact of consciousness with consciousness is then entirely veiled or heavily overlaid, even though it still goes on within our subliminal parts, just as there is also, though wholly concealed and not directly operative, the underlying secret identity and oneness. There is on the surface a complete separateness, a division into self and not-self; there is the necessity of dealing with the not-self, but no direct means of knowing it or mastering it. Nature then creates indirect means, a contact by physical organs of sense, a penetration of outside impacts through the nerve currents, a reaction of mind and its co-ordinations acting as an aid and supplement to the activity of the physical organs, — all of them methods of an indirect knowledge; for the consciousness is forced to rely on these instruments and cannot act directly on the object. To these means is added a reason, intelligence and intuition which seize on the communications thus indirectly brought to them, put all in order and utilise their data to get as much knowledge and mastery and possession of the not-self or as much partial unity with it as the original division allows to the separated being.

These means are obviously insufficient and often inefficient, and the indirect basis of the mind's operations afflicts knowledge with a fundamental incertitude; but this initial insufficiency is inherent in the very nature of our material existence and of all still undelivered existence that emerges from the Inconscience.

The Inconscience is an inverse reproduction of the supreme superconscience: it has the same absoluteness of being and automatic action, but in a vast involved trance; it is being lost in itself, plunged in its own abyss of infinity. Instead of a luminous absorption in self-existence there is a tenebrous involution in it, the darkness veiled within darkness of the Rig Veda, *tama āsīt tamasā gūḍham*, which makes it look like Non-Existence; instead of a luminous inherent self-awareness there is a consciousness plunged into an abyss of self-oblivion, inherent in being but not awake in being. Yet is this involved consciousness still a concealed knowledge by identity; it carries in it the awareness of all the truths of existence hidden in its dark infinite and, when it acts and creates, — but it acts first as Energy and not as Consciousness, — everything is arranged with the precision and perfection of an intrinsic knowledge. In all material things reside a mute and involved Real-Idea, a substantial and self-effective intuition, an eyeless exact perception, an automatic intelligence working out its unexpressed and unthought conceptions, a blindly seeing sureness of sight, a dumb infallible sureness of suppressed feeling coated in insensibility, which effectuate all that has to be effected. All this state and action of the Inconscient corresponds very evidently with the same state and action of the pure Superconscience, but translated into terms of self-darkness in place of the original self-light. Intrinsic in the material form, these powers are not possessed by the form, but yet work in its mute subconscience.

We can, in this knowledge, understand more clearly the stages of the emergence of consciousness from involution to its evolved appearance, of which we have already attempted some general conception. The material existence has only a physical, not a mental individuality, but there is a subliminal Presence in it, the one Conscious in unconscious things, that determines the operation of its indwelling energies. If, as has been affirmed, a

material object receives and retains the impression of the contacts of things around it and energies emanate from it, so that an occult knowledge can become aware of its past, can make us conscious of these emanating influences, the intrinsic unorganised Awareness pervading the form but not yet enlightening it must be the cause of this receptivity and these capacities. What we see from outside is that material objects like plants and minerals have their powers, properties and inherent influences, but as there is no faculty or means of communication, it is only by being brought into contact with person or object or by a conscious utilisation by living beings that their influences can become active, — such a utilisation is the practical side of more than one human science. But still these powers and influences are attributes of Being, not of mere indeterminate substance, they are forces of the Spirit emerging by Energy from its self-absorbed Inconscience. This first crude mechanical action of an inherent absorbed conscious energy opens in the primary forms of life into submental life-vibrations that imply an involved sensation; there is a seeking for growth, light, air, life-room, a blind feeling out, which is still internal and confined within the immobile being, unable to formulate its instincts, to communicate, to externalise itself. An immobility not organised to establish living relations, it endures and absorbs contacts, involuntarily inflicts but cannot voluntarily impose them; the inconscience is still dominant, still works out everything by the secret involved knowledge by identity, it has not yet developed the surface contactual means of a conscious knowledge. This further development begins with overtly conscious life; what we see in it is the imprisoned consciousness struggling out to the surface: it is under the compulsion of this struggle that the separated living being strives, however blindly at first and within narrow limits, to enter into conscious relations with the rest of the world-being outside it. It is by the growing amount of contacts that it can receive and respond to and by the growing amount of contacts that it can put out from itself or impose in order to satisfy its needs and impulsions that the being of living matter develops its consciousness, grows from inconscience or subconscience into a limited separative knowledge.

We see then all the powers inherent in the original self-existent spiritual Awareness slowly brought out and manifested in this growing separative consciousness; they are activities suppressed but native to the secret and involved knowledge by identity and they now emerge by degrees in a form strangely diminished and tentative. First, there emerges a crude or veiled sense which develops into precise sensations aided by a vital instinct or concealed intuition; then a life-mind perception manifests and at its back an obscure consciousness-sight and feeling of things; emotion vibrates out and seeks an interchange with others; last arises to the surface conception, thought, reason comprehending and apprehending the object, combining its data of knowledge. But all are incomplete, still maimed by the separative ignorance and the first obscuring inconscience; all are dependent on the outward means, not empowered to act in their own right: consciousness cannot act directly on consciousness; there is a constructive envelopment and penetration of things by the mind consciousness, but not a real possession; there is no knowledge by identity. Only when the subliminal is able to force upon the frontal mind and sense some of its secret activities pure and untranslated into the ordinary forms of mental intelligence, does a rudimentary action of the deeper methods lift itself to the surface; but such emergences are still an exception, they strike across the normality of our acquired and learned knowledge with a savour of the abnormal and the supernormal. It is only by an opening to our inner being or an entry into it that a direct intimate awareness can be added to the outer indirect awareness. It is only by our awakening to our inmost soul or superconscient self that there can be a beginning of the spiritual knowledge with identity as its basis, its constituent power, its intrinsic substance.

CHAPTER XI

The Boundaries of the Ignorance

> One who thinks there is this world and no other ...
>
> *Katha Upanishad.*[1]

> Extended within the Infinite ... headless and footless, concealing his two ends.[2]
>
> *Rig Veda.*[3]

> He who has the knowledge "I am Brahman" becomes all this that is; but whoever worships another divinity than the One Self and thinks, "Other is he and I am other", he knows not.
>
> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*[4]

> This Self is fourfold, — the Self of Waking who has the outer intelligence and enjoys external things, is its first part; the Self of Dream who has the inner intelligence and enjoys things subtle, is its second part; the Self of Sleep, unified, a massed intelligence, blissful and enjoying bliss, is the third part ... the lord of all, the omniscient, the inner Control. That which is unseen, indefinable, self-evident in its one selfhood, is the fourth part: this is the Self, this is that which has to be known.
>
> *Mandukya Upanishad.*[5]

> A conscious being, no larger than a man's thumb, stands in the centre of our self; he is master of the past and the present ... he is today and he is tomorrow.
>
> *Katha Upanishad.*[6]

IT IS now possible to review in its larger lines this Ignorance, or this separative knowledge labouring towards identical knowledge, which constitutes our human mentality and, in an obscurer form, all consciousness that has evolved below our level. We see that in us it consists of a succession of waves of being and force, pressing from outside and rising from within, which become stuff of consciousness and formulate in a mental cognition and mentalised sensation of self and things in Time and Space. Time presents itself to us as a flow of dynamic movement, Space as an objective field of contents for the experience of this imperfect and developing awareness. By immediate

[1] I. 2. 6. [2] Head and feet, the superconscient and the inconscient. [3] IV. I. 7, 11.
[4] I. 4. 10. [5] Verses 2-7. [6] II. 1. 12, 13.

awareness the mental being mobile in Time lives perpetually in the present; by memory he saves a certain part of his experience of self and things from streaming away from him entirely into the past; by thought and will and action, by mind energy, life energy, body energy he utilises it for what he becomes in the present and is yet to become hereafter; the force of being in him that has made him what he is works to prolong, develop and amplify his becoming in the future. All this insecurely held material of self-expression and experience of things, this partial knowledge accumulated in the succession of Time, is co-ordinated for him by perception, memory, intelligence and will to be utilised for an ever-new or ever-repeated becoming and for the mental, vital, physical action which helps him to grow into what he is to be and to express what he already is. The present totality of all this experience of consciousness and output of energy is co-ordinated for relation to his being, gathered into consistency around an ego-sense which formulates the habit of response of self-experience to the contacts of Nature in a persistent limited field of conscious being. It is this ego-sense that gives a first basis of coherence to what otherwise might be a string or mass of floating impressions: all that is so sensed is referred to a corresponding artificial centre of mental consciousness in the understanding, the ego-idea. This ego-sense in the life stuff and this ego-idea in the mind maintain a constructed symbol of self, the separative ego, which does duty for the hidden real self, the spirit or true being. The surface mental individuality is, in consequence, always ego-centric; even its altruism is an enlargement of its ego: the ego is the lynch-pin invented to hold together the motion of our wheel of nature. The necessity of centralisation around the ego continues until there is no longer need of any such device or contrivance because there has emerged the true self, the spiritual being, which is at once wheel and motion and that which holds all together, the centre and the circumference.

But the moment we study ourselves, we find that the self-experience which we thus co-ordinate and consciously utilise for life, is a small part even of our waking individual consciousness. We fasten only upon a very limited number of the mental sensations and perceptions of self and things which come up into our

surface consciousness in our continual present: of these again memory saves up only a scanty part from the oblivious gulf of the past; of the storings of memory our intelligence utilises only a small portion for co-ordinated knowledge, our will utilises a smaller percentage for action. A narrow selection, a large rejection or reservation, a miserly-spendthrift system of waste of material and unemployment of resources and a scanty and disorderly modicum of useful spending and utilisable balance seems to be the method of Nature in our conscious becoming even as it is in the field of the material universe. But this is only in appearance, for it would be a wholly untrue account to say that all that is not thus saved up and utilised is destroyed, becomes null and has passed away ineffectually and in vain. A great part of it has been quietly used by Nature herself to form us and actuates that sufficiently large mass of our growth and becoming and action for which our conscious memory, will and intelligence are not responsible. A still greater part is used by her as a store from which she draws and which she utilises, while we ourselves have utterly forgotten the origin and provenance of this material which we find ourselves employing with a deceptive sense of creation; for we imagine we are creating this new material of our work, when we are only combining results out of that which we have forgotten but Nature in us has remembered. If we admit rebirth as part of her system, we shall realise that all experience has its use; for all experience counts in this prolonged building and nothing is rejected except what has exhausted its utility and would be a burden on the future. A judgment from what appears now in our conscious surface is fallacious: for when we study and understand, we perceive that only a little of her action and growth in us is conscious; the bulk of it is carried on subconsciously as in the rest of her material life. We are not only what we know of ourselves but an immense more which we do not know; our momentary personality is only a bubble on the ocean of our existence.

A superficial observation of our waking consciousness shows us that of a great part of our individual being and becoming we are quite ignorant; it is to us the Inconscient, just as much as the life of the plant, the metal, the earth, the elements. But if we

carry our knowledge farther, pushing psychological experiment and observation beyond their normal bounds, we find how vast is the sphere of this supposed Inconscient or this subconscient in our total existence, — the subconscient, so seeming and so called by us because it is a concealed consciousness, — and what a small and fragmentary portion of our being is covered by our waking self-awareness. We arrive at the knowledge that our waking mind and ego are only a superimposition upon a submerged, a subliminal self, — for so that self appears to us, — or, more accurately, an inner being, with a much vaster capacity of experience; our mind and ego are like the crown and dome of a temple jutting out from the waves while the great body of the building is submerged under the surface of the waters.

This concealed self and consciousness is our real or whole being, of which the outer is a part and a phenomenon, a selective formation for a surface use. We perceive only a small number of the contacts of things which impinge upon us; the inner being perceives all that enters or touches us and our environment. We perceive only a part of the workings of our life and being; the inner being perceives so much that we might almost suppose that nothing escapes its view. We remember only a small selection from our perceptions, and of these even we keep a great part in a store-room where we cannot always lay our hand upon what we need; the inner being retains everything that it has ever received and has it always ready to hand. We can form into co-ordinated understanding and knowledge only so much of our perceptions and memories as our trained intelligence and mental capacity can grasp in their sense and appreciate in their relations: the intelligence of the inner being needs no training, but preserves the accurate form and relations of all its perceptions and memories and, — though this is a proposition which may be considered doubtful or difficult to concede in its fullness, — can grasp immediately, when it does not possess already, their significance. And its perceptions are not confined, as are ordinarily those of the waking mind, to the scanty gleanings of the physical senses, but extend far beyond and use, as telepathic phenomena of many kinds bear witness, a subtle sense the limits of which are too wide to be easily fixed. The relations between the surface will or

impulsion and the subliminal urge, mistakenly described as unconscious or subconscious, have not been properly studied except in regard to unusual and unorganised manifestations and to certain morbidly abnormal phenomena of the diseased human mind; but if we pursue our observation far enough, we shall find that the cognition and will or impulsive force of the inner being really stand behind the whole conscious becoming; the latter represents only that part of its secret endeavour and achievement which rises successfully to the surface of our life. To know our inner being is the first step towards a real self-knowledge.

If we undertake this self-discovery and enlarge our knowledge of the subliminal self, so conceiving it as to include in it our lower subconscient and upper superconscient ends, we shall discover that it is really this which provides the whole material of our apparent being and that our perceptions, our memories, our effectuations of will and intelligence are only a selection from its perceptions, memories, activities and relations of will and intelligence; our very ego is only a minor and superficial formulation of its self-consciousness and self-experience. It is, as it were, the urgent sea out of which the waves of our conscious becoming arise. But what are its limits? how far does it extend? what is its fundamental nature? Ordinarily, we speak of a subconscious existence and include in this term all that is not on the waking surface. But the whole or the greater part of the inner or subliminal self can hardly be characterised by that epithet; for when we say subconscious, we think readily of an obscure unconsciousness or half-consciousness or else a submerged consciousness below and in a way inferior to and less than our organised waking awareness or, at least, less in possession of itself. But we find, when we go within, that somewhere in our subliminal part, — though not co-extensive with it since it has also obscure and ignorant regions, — there is a consciousness much wider, more luminous, more in possession of itself and things than that which wakes upon our surface and is the percipient of our daily hours; that is our inner being, and it is this which we must regard as our subliminal self and set apart the subconscient as an inferior, a lowest occult province of our nature. In the same way there is a superconscient part of our total existence in which

there is what we discover to be our highest self, and this too we can set apart as a higher occult province of our nature.

But what then is the subconscient and where does it begin and how is it related to our surface being or to the subliminal of which it would seem more properly to be a province? We are aware of our body and know that we have a physical existence, even very largely identify ourselves with it, and yet most of its operations are really subconscious to our mental being; not only does the mind take no part in them but, as we suppose, our most physical being has no awareness of its own hidden operations or, by itself, of its own existence; it knows or rather feels only so much of itself as is enlightened by mind-sense and observable by intelligence. We are aware of a vitality working in this bodily form and structure as in the plant or lower animal, a vital existence which is also for the most part subconscious to us, for we only observe some of its movements and reactions. We are partly aware of its operations, but not by any means of all or most of them, and rather of those which are abnormal than those which are normal; its wants impress themselves more forcibly upon us than its satisfactions, its diseases and disorders than its health and its regular rhythm, its death is more poignant to us than its life is vivid; we know as much of it as we can consciously observe and use or as much as forces itself upon us by pain and pleasure and other sensations or as a cause of nervous or physical reaction and disturbance, but no more. Accordingly, we suppose that this vital-physical part of us also is not conscious of its own operations or has only a suppressed consciousness or no-consciousness like the plant or an inchoate consciousness like the incipient animal; it becomes conscious only so far as it is enlightened by mind and observable by intelligence.

This is an exaggeration and a confusion due to our identification of consciousness with mentality and mental awareness. Mind identifies itself to a certain extent with the movements proper to physical life and body and annexes them to its mentality, so that all consciousness seems to us to be mental. But if we draw back, if we separate the mind as witness from these parts of us, we can discover that life and body, — even the most physical parts of life, — have a consciousness of their own, a

consciousness proper to an obscurer vital and to a bodily being, even such an elemental awareness as primitive animal forms may have, but in us partly taken up by the mind and to that extent mentalised. Yet it has not, in its independent motion, the mental awareness which we enjoy; if there is mind in it, it is mind involved and implicit in the body and in the physical life: there is no organised self-consciousness, but only a sense of action and reaction, movement, impulse and desire, need, necessary activities imposed by Nature, hunger, instinct, pain, insensibility and pleasure. Although thus inferior, it has this awareness obscure, limited and automatic; but since it is less in possession of itself, void of what to us is the stamp of mentality, we may justly call it the submental, but not so justly the subconscious part of our being. For when we stand back from it, when we can separate our mind from its sensations, we perceive that this is a nervous and sensational and automatically dynamic mode of consciousness, a gradation of awareness different from the mind: it has its own separate reactions to contacts and is sensitive to them in its own power of feeling; it does not depend for that on the mind's perception and response. The true subconscious is other than this vital or physical substratum; it is the Inconscient vibrating on the borders of consciousness, sending up its motions to be changed into conscious stuff, swallowing into its depths impressions of past experience as seeds of unconscious habit and returning them constantly but often chaotically to the surface consciousness, missioning upwards much futile or perilous stuff of which the origin is obscure to us, in dream, in mechanical repetitions of all kinds, in untraceable impulsions and motives, in mental, vital, physical perturbations and upheavals, in dumb automatic necessities of our obscurest parts of nature.

But the subliminal self has not at all this subconscious character: it is in full possession of a mind, a life-force, a clear subtle-physical sense of things. It has the same capacities as our waking being, a subtle sense and perception, a comprehensive extended memory and an intensive selecting intelligence, will, self-consciousness; but even though the same in kind, they are wider, more developed, more sovereign. And it has other capa-

cities which exceed those of our mortal mind because of a power of direct awareness of the being, whether acting in itself or turned upon its object, which arrives more swiftly at knowledge, more swiftly at effectivity of will, more deeply at understanding and satisfaction of impulse. Our surface mind is hardly a true mentality, so involved, bound, hampered, conditioned is it by the body and bodily life and the limitations of the nerve-system and the physical organs. But the subliminal self has a true mentality superior to these limitations; it exceeds the physical mind and physical organs although it is aware of them and their works and is, indeed, in a large degree their cause or creator. It is only subconscious in the sense of not bringing all or most of itself to the surface, it works always behind the veil: it is rather a secret intraconscient and circumconscient than a subconscient; for it envelops quite as much as it supports the outer nature. This description is no doubt truest of the deeper parts of the subliminal; in other layers of it nearer to our surface there is a more ignorant action and those who, penetrating within, pause in the zones of lesser coherence or in the No-man's-land between the subliminal and the surface, may fall into much delusion and confusion: but that too, though ignorant, is not of the nature of the subconscious; the confusion of these intermediate zones has no kinship to the Inconscience.

We might say then that there are three elements in the totality of our being: there is the submental and the subconscient which appears to us as if it were inconscient, comprising the material basis and a good part of our life and body; there is the subliminal, which comprises the inner being, taken in its entirety of inner mind, inner life, inner physical with the soul or psychic entity supporting them; there is this waking consciousness which the subliminal and the subconscient throw up on the surface, a wave of their secret surge. But even this is not an adequate account of what we are; for there is not only something deep within behind our normal self-awareness, but something also high above it: that too is ourselves, other than our surface mental personality, but not outside our true self; that too is a country of our spirit. For the subliminal proper is no more than the inner being on the level of the Knowledge-Ignorance

luminous, powerful and extended indeed beyond the poor conception of our waking mind, but still not the supreme or the whole sense of our being, not its ultimate mystery. We become aware, in a certain experience, of a range of being superconscient to all these three, aware too of something, a supreme highest Reality sustaining and exceeding them all, which humanity speaks of vaguely as Spirit, God, the Oversoul: from these superconscient ranges we have visitations and in our highest being we tend towards them and to that supreme Spirit. There is then in our total range of existence a superconscience as well as a subconscience and inconscience, overarching and perhaps enveloping our subliminal and our waking selves, but unknown to us, seemingly unattainable and incommunicable.

But with the extension of our knowledge we discover what this Spirit or Oversoul is: it is ultimately our own highest deepest vastest Self, it is apparent on its summits or by reflection in ourselves as Sachchidananda creating us and the world by the power of His divine Knowledge-Will, spiritual, supramental, truth-conscious, infinite. That is the real Being, Lord and Creator, who, as the Cosmic Self veiled in Mind and Life and Matter, has descended into that which we call the Inconscient and constitutes and directs its subconscient existence by His supramental will and knowledge, has ascended out of the Inconscient and dwells in the inner being constituting and directing its subliminal existence by the same will and knowledge, has cast up out of the subliminal our surface existence and dwells secretly in it overseeing with the same supreme light and mastery its stumbling and groping movements. If the subliminal and subconscient may be compared to a sea which throws up the waves of our surface mental existence, the superconscience may be compared to an ether which constitutes, contains, overroofs, inhabits and determines the movements of the sea and its waves. It is there in this higher ether that we are inherently and intrinsically conscious of our self and spirit, not as here below by a reflection in silent mind or by acquisition of the knowledge of a hidden Being within us; it is through it, through that ether of superconscience, that we can pass to a supreme status, knowledge, experience. Of this superconscient existence through

which we can arrive at the highest status of our real, our supreme Self, we are normally even more ignorant than of the rest of our being; yet is it into the knowledge of it that our being emerging out of the involution in Inconscience is struggling to evolve. This limitation to our surface existence, this unconsciousness of our highest as of our inmost self, is our first, our capital ignorance.

We exist superficially by a becoming in Time; but here again out of that becoming in Time the surface mind, which we call ourselves, is ignorant of all the long past and the long future, aware only of the little life which it remembers and not of all even of that; for much of it is lost to its observation, much to its memory. We readily believe, — for the simple and compelling but insufficient reason that we do not remember, have not perceived, are not informed of anything else, — that we came into existence first by our physical birth into this life and shall cease to exist by the death of this body and the cessation of this brief physical activity. But while this is true of our physical mentality and physical vitality, our corporeal sheath, for they have been constituted at our birth and are dissolved by death, it is not true of our real becoming in Time. For our real self in the cosmos is the Superconscient which becomes the subliminal self and throws up this apparent surface self to act out the brief and limited part assigned to it between birth and death as a present living and conscious self-formation of the being in the stuff of a world of inconscient Nature. The true being which we are no more dies by the cessation of one life than the actor ceases to exist when he has finished one of his parts or the poet when he has poured out something of himself in one of his poems; our mortal personality is only such a role or such a creative self-expression. Whether or no we accept the theory of many births of the same soul or psychic being in various human bodies upon this earth, certain it is that our becoming in Time goes far back into the past and continues far on into the future. For neither the superconscient nor the subliminal can be limited by a few moments of Time: the one is eternal and Time is only one of its modes; to the other, to the subliminal, it is an infinite field of various experience and the very existence of the being

presupposes all the past for its own and equally all the future. Yet of this past which alone explains our present being, our mind knows, if knowledge it can be called, only this actual physical existence and its memories: of the future which alone explains the constant trend of our becoming, it knows nothing. So fixed are we in the experience of our ignorance that we even insist that the one can be known only by its vestiges and the other cannot be known, because the future is not yet and the past is no longer in existence; yet are they both here in us, the past involved and active, the future ready to evolve in the continuity of the secret spirit. This is another limiting and frustrating ignorance.

But even here the self-ignorance of man does not end; for not only is he ignorant of his superconscient Self, of his subliminal self, of his subconscient self, he is ignorant of his world in which he presently lives, which constantly acts on and through him and on which and by which he has to act. And the stamp of his ignorance is this, that he regards it as something quite separate from him, as not-self because it is other than his individual nature-formation and his ego. So too when he confronts his superconscient Self, he thinks of it first as something quite other than he, an external, even extracosmic God; when he confronts and becomes aware of his subliminal self, it seems to him at first another greater person or another consciousness than his own which can support and guide him. Of the world he regards only one little foam-bubble, his life and body, as himself. But when we get into our subliminal consciousness, we find it extending itself to be commensurate with its world; when we get into our superconscient Self, we find that the world is only its manifestation and that all in it is the One, all in it is our self. We see that there is one indivisible Matter of which our body is a knot, one indivisible Life of which our life is an eddy, one indivisible Mind of which our mind is a receiving and recording, forming or translating and transmitting station, one indivisible Spirit of which our soul and individual being are a portion or a manifestation. It is the ego-sense which clinches the division and in which the ignorance we superficially are finds its power to maintain the strong though always per-

meable walls it has created to be its own prison. Ego is the most formidable of the knots which keep us tied to the Ignorance.

As we are ignorant of our existence in Time except the small hour which we remember, so we are ignorant of ourselves in Space except the small span of which we are mentally and sensationally conscious, the single body that moves there and the mind and life which are identified with it, and we regard the environment as a not-self we have to deal with and use: it is this identification and this conception that form the life of the ego. Space according to one view is only the co-existence of things or of souls; the Sankhya affirms the plurality of souls and their independent existence, and their co-existence is then only possible by the unity of Nature-force, their field of experience, Prakriti: but, even granting this, the co-existence is there and it is in the end co-existence in one Being. Space is the self-conceptive extension of that one Being; it is the one spiritual Existence displaying the field of movement of its Conscious-Force in its own self as Space. Because that Conscious-Force concentrates in manifold bodies, lives, minds and the soul presides over one of them, therefore our mentality is concentrated in this and regards this as itself and all the rest as not-self, just as it regards its one life on which it concentrates by a similar ignorance as its whole term of existence cut off from the past and the future. Yet we cannot really know our own mentality without knowing the one Mind, our own vitality without knowing the one Life, our own body without knowing the one Matter; for not only is their nature determined by the nature of that, but by that their activities are at every moment being influenced and determined. But, with all this sea of being flowing in on us, we do not participate in its consciousness, but know of it only so much as can be brought into the surface of our minds and co-ordinated there. The world lives in us, thinks in us, forms itself in us; but we imagine that it is we who live, think, become separately by ourselves and for ourselves. As we are ignorant of our timeless, of our superconscient, of our subliminal and subconscient selves, so are we ignorant of our universal self. This alone saves us that ours is an ignorance which is full of the impulse and strives irresistibly, eternally, by the very law of its being

towards the realisation of self-possession and self-knowledge. A many-sided Ignorance striving to become an all-embracing Knowledge is the definition of the consciousness of man the mental being, — or, looking at it from another side, we may say equally that it is a limited separative awareness of things striving to become an integral consciousness and an integral Knowledge.

CHAPTER XII

The Origin of the Ignorance

> By energism of consciousness[1] Brahman is massed; from that Matter is born and from Matter Life and Mind and the worlds.
>
> *Mundaka Upanishad.*[2]

> He desired, "May I be Many", he concentrated in Tapas, by Tapas he created the world; creating, he entered into it; entering, he became the existent and the beyond-existence, he became the expressed and the unexpressed, he became knowledge and ignorance, he became the truth and the falsehood: he became the truth, even all this whatsoever that is. "That Truth" they call him.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[3]

> Energism of consciousness[1] is Brahman.
>
> *Taittiriya Upanishad.*[4]

IT BECOMES necessary and possible, now that so much has been fixed, to consider at close quarters the problem of the Ignorance from the point of view of its pragmatic origin, the process of consciousness which brought it into existence. It is on the basis of an integral Oneness as the truth of existence that we have to consider the problem and see how far the different possible solutions are on this basis applicable. How could this manifold ignorance or this narrowly self-limiting and separative knowledge arise and come into action or maintain itself in action in an absolute Being who must be absolute consciousness and therefore cannot be subject to ignorance? How is even an apparent division effectively operated and kept in continuance in the Indivisible? The Being, integrally one, cannot be ignorant of itself; and since all things are itself, conscious modifications, determinations of its being, it cannot either be ignorant of things, of their true nature, of their true action. But though we say that we are That, that the Jivatman or individual self is no other than the Paramatman, no other than the Absolute, yet we are certainly ignorant both of ourselves and things, from which this contradiction results that what must be in its very grain in-

[1] Tapas. [2] I. 1. 8. [3] II. 6. [4] III. 2-5.

capable of ignorance is yet capable of it, and has plunged itself into it by some will of its being or some necessity or possibility of its nature. We do not ease the difficulty if we plead that Mind, which is the seat of ignorance, is a thing of Maya, non-existent, not-Brahman, and that Brahman, the Absolute, the sole Existence cannot in any way be touched by the ignorance of mind which is part of the illusory being, Asat, the Non-Existence. This is an escape which is not open to us if we admit an integral Oneness: for then it is evident that, in making so radical a distinction and at the same time cancelling it by terming it illusory, we are using the magic or Maya of thought and word in order to conceal from ourselves the fact that we are dividing and denying the unity of the Brahman; for we have erected two opposite powers, Brahman incapable of illusion and self-illusive Maya, and pitchforked them into an impossible unity. If Brahman is the sole existence, Maya can be nothing but a power of Brahman, a force of his consciousness or a result of his being; and if the Jivatman, one with Brahman, is subject to its own Maya, the Brahman in it is subject to Maya. But this is not intrinsically or fundamentally possible: the subjection can only be a submission of something in Nature to an action of Nature which is part of the conscious and free movement of the Spirit in things, a play of its own self-manifesting Omniscience. Ignorance must be part of the movement of the One, a development of its consciousness knowingly adopted, to which it is not forcibly subjected but which it uses for its cosmic purpose.

It is not open to us to get rid of the whole difficulty by saying that the Jivatman and the Supreme are not One, but eternally different, the one subject to ignorance, the other absolute in being and consciousness and therefore in knowledge; for this contradicts the supreme experience and the whole experience which is that of unity in being, whatever difference there may be in the action of Nature. It is easier to accept the fact of unity in difference which is so evident and pervasive in all the building of the universe and satisfy ourselves with the statement that we are one, yet different, one in essential being and therefore in essential nature, different in soul-form and therefore in active nature. But we thereby only state the fact, leaving the difficulty raised by the fact unsolved,

how that which belongs in the essence of its being to the unity of the Absolute and should therefore be one with it and with all in consciousness, comes to be divided in its dynamic form of self and its activity and subject to Ignorance. It is also to be noted that the statement would not be wholly true, since it is possible for the Jivatman to enter into unity with the active nature of the One and not only into a static essential oneness. Or we may escape the difficulty by saying that beyond or above existence and its problems there is the Unknowable which is beyond or above our experience, and that the action of Maya has already begun in the Unknowable before the world began and therefore is itself unknowable and inexplicable in its cause and its origin. This would be a sort of idealistic as opposed to a materialistic Agnosticism. But all Agnosticism is subject to this objection that it may be nothing but our refusal to know, a too ready embracing of an apparent and present restriction or constriction of consciousness, a sense of impotence which may be permitted to the immediate limitations of the mind but not to the Jivatman who is one with the Supreme. The Supreme must surely know himself and the cause of ignorance, and therefore the Jivatman has no ground to despair of any knowledge or deny his capacity of knowing the integral Supreme and the original cause of his own present ignorance.

The Unknowable, if it is at all, may be a supreme state of Sachchidananda beyond our highest conceptions of existence, consciousness and bliss; that is what was evidently meant by the Asat, the Non-Existent of the Taittiriya Upanishad, which alone was in the beginning and out of which the existent was born, and possibly too it may be the inmost sense of the Nirvana of the Buddha: for the dissolution of our present state by Nirvana may be a reaching to some highest state beyond all notion or experience of self even, an ineffable release from our sense of existence. Or it may be the Upanishad's absolute and unconditioned bliss which is beyond expression and beyond understanding, because it surpasses all that we can conceive of or describe as consciousness and existence. This is the sense in which we have already accepted it; for the acceptation commits us only to a refusal to put a limit to the ascension of the Infinite. Or, if it is

not this, if it is something quite different from existence, even from an unconditioned existence, it must be the absolute Non-Being of the nihilistic thinker.

But out of absolute Nothingness nothing can come, not even anything merely apparent, not even an illusion; and if the absolute Non-Existence is not that, then it can only be an absolute eternally unrealised Potentiality, an enigmatic zero of the Infinite out of which relative potentialities may at any time emerge, but only some actually succeed in emerging into phenomenal appearance. Out of this Non-Existence anything may arise, and there is no possibility of saying what or why; it is for all practical purposes a seed of absolute chaos out of which by some happy, — or rather unhappy, — accident there has emerged the order of a universe. Or we may say that there is no real order of the universe; what we take for such is a persistent habit of the senses and the life and a figment of the mind and it is useless to seek for an ultimate reason of things. Out of an absolute chaos all paradox and absurdity can be born, and the world is such a paradox, a mysterious sum of contraries and puzzles, or, it may be, in effect, as some have felt or thought, a huge error, a monstrous, an infinite delirium. Of such a universe not an absolute Consciousness and Knowledge, but an absolute Inconscience and Ignorance may be the source. Anything may be true in such a cosmos: everything may have been born out of nothing; thinking mind may be only a disease of unthinking Force or inconscient Matter; dominant order, which we suppose to be existence according to the truth of things, may be really the mechanical law of an eternal self-ignorance and not the self-evolution of a supreme self-ruling conscious Will; perpetual existence may be the constant phenomenon of an eternal Nihil. All opinions about the origins of things become of an equal force, since all are equally valid or invalid; for all become equally possible where there is no sure starting-point and no ascertainable goal of the revolutions of the becoming. All these opinions have been held by the human mind and in all there has been profit, even if we regard them as errors; for errors are permitted to the mind because they open doors upon truth, negatively by destroying opposite errors, positively by preparing an element in a new constructive hypothesis. But, pushed too

far, this view of things leads to the negation of the whole aim of philosophy, which seeks for knowledge and not for chaos and which cannot fulfil itself if the last word of knowledge is the Unknowable, but only if it is something, to use the words of the Upanishad, which being known all is known. The Unknowable, — not absolutely unknowable, but beyond mental knowledge, — can only be a higher degree in the intensity of being of that Something, a degree beyond the loftiest summit attainable by mental beings, and, if it were known as it must be known to itself, that discovery would not destroy entirely what is given us by our supreme possible knowledge but rather carry it to a higher fulfilment and larger truth of what it has already gained by self-vision and self-experience. It is then this Something, an Absolute which can be so known that all truths can stand in it and by it and find there their reconciliation, that we must discover as our starting-point and keep as our constant base of thinking and seeing and by it find a solution of the problem; for it is That alone that can carry in it a key to the paradoxes of the universe.

This Something is, as Vedanta insists and as we have throughout insisted, in its manifest nature Sachchidananda, a trinity of absolute existence, consciousness and bliss. It is from this primal truth that we must start in approaching the problem, and it is evident then that the solution must be found in an action of consciousness manifesting itself as knowledge and yet limiting that knowledge in such a way as to create the phenomenon of the Ignorance, — and since the Ignorance is a phenomenon of the dynamic action of Force of Consciousness, not an essential fact but a creation, a consequence of that action, it is this Force aspect of Consciousness that it will be fruitful to consider. Absolute consciousness is in its nature absolute power; the nature of Chit is Shakti: Force or Shakti concentrated and energised for cognition or for action in a realising power effective or creative, the power of conscious being dwelling upon itself and bringing out, as it were, by the heat of its incubation[1] the

[1] Tapas means literally heat, afterwards any kind of energism, askesis, austerity of conscious force acting upon itself or its object. The world was created by Tapas in the form, says the ancient image, of an egg, which being broken, again by Tapas, heat of incubation of conscious force, the Purusha emerged, Soul in Nature, like a bird from the egg. It may be observed that the usual translation of the word *tapasyā* in English books, "penance", is quite mis-

seed and development of all that is within it or, to use a language convenient to our minds, of all its truths and potentialities, has created the universe. If we examine our own consciousness, we shall see that this power of its energy applying itself to its object is really the most positive dynamic force it has; by that it arrives at all its knowledge and its action and its creation. But for us there are two objects on which the dynamism within can act, ourselves, the internal world, and others, whether creatures or things, the external world around us. To Sachchidananda this distinction with its effective and operative consequences does not apply in the same way as for us, because all is himself and within himself and there is no such division as we make by the limitations of our mind. Secondly, in us only a part of the force of our being is identified with our voluntary action, with our will engaged in mental or other activity, the rest is to our surface mental awareness involuntary in its action or subconscient or superconscient, and from this division also a great number of important practical consequences emerge: but in Sachchidananda this division too and its consequences do not apply, since all is his one indivisible self and all action and result are movements of his one indivisible will, his consciousness-force in dynamic operation. Tapas is the nature of action of his consciousness as of ours, but it is the integral Tapas of an integral consciousness in an indivisible Existence.

But here a question may arise, since there is a passivity in Existence and in Nature as well as an activity, immobile status as well as kinesis, what is the place and role of this Force, this power and its concentration in regard to a status where there is no play of energy, where all is immobile. In ourselves we habitually associate our Tapas, our conscious force, with active consciousness, with energy in play and in internal or external act and motion. That which is passive in us produces no action or only an involuntary or mechanical action, and we do not associate it with our will or conscious force; still, since there too there

leading, — the idea of penance entered rarely into the austerity practised by Indian ascetics. Nor was mortification of the body the essence even of the most severe and self-afflicting austerities ; the aim was rather an overpassing of the hold of the bodily nature on the consciousness or else a supernormal energising of the consciousness and will to gain some spiritual or other object.

is the possibility of action or the emergence of an automatic activity, it must have at least a passively responsive or automatic conscious force in it; or there is in it either a secretly positive or a negative and inverse Tapas. It may also be that there is a larger conscious force, power or will in our being unknown to us which is behind this involuntary action, — if not a will, at least a force of some kind which itself initiates action or else responds to the contacts, suggestions, stimulations of the universal Energy. In Nature also we know that things stable, inert or passive are yet maintained in their energy by a secret and unceasing motion, an energy in action upholding the apparent immobility. Here too, then, all is due to the presence of Shakti, to the action of its power in concentration, its Tapas. But beyond this, beyond this relative aspect of status and kinesis, we find that we have the power to arrive at what seems to us an absolute passivity or immobility of our consciousness in which we cease from all mental and physical activity. There seem, then, to be an active consciousness in which consciousness works as an energy throwing up knowledge and activity out of itself and of which therefore Tapas is the character, and a passive consciousness in which consciousness does not act as an energy, but only exists as a status and of which therefore absence of Tapas or force in action is the character. Is the apparent absence of Tapas in this state real, or is there such an effective distinction in Sachchidananda? It is affirmed that there is: the dual status of Brahman, quiescent and creative, is indeed one of the most important and fruitful distinctions in Indian philosophy; it is besides a fact of spiritual experience.

Here let us observe, first, that by this passivity in ourselves we arrive from particular and broken knowledge at a greater, a one and a unifying knowledge; secondly, that if, in the state of passivity, we open ourselves entirely to what is beyond, we can become aware of a Power acting upon us which we feel to be not our own in the limited egoistic sense, but universal or transcendental, and that this Power works through us for a greater play of knowledge, a greater play of energy, action and result, which also we feel to be not our own, but that of the Divine, of Sachchidananda, ourselves only its field or channel. The result

happens in both cases because our individual consciousness rests from an ignorant limited action and opens itself to the supreme status or to the supreme action. In the latter, the more dynamic opening, there is power and play of knowledge and action, and that is Tapas; but in the former also, in the static consciousness, there is evidently a power for knowledge and a concentration of knowledge or at least a concentration of consciousness in immobility and a self-realisation, and that too is Tapas. Therefore it would seem that Tapas, concentration of power of consciousness, is the character of both the passive and the active consciousness of Brahman, and that our own passivity also has a certain character of an unseen supporting or instrumentalising Tapas. It is a concentration of energy of consciousness that sustains, while it lasts, all creation, all action and kinesis; but it is also a concentration of power of consciousness that supports inwardly or informs all status, even the most immobile passivity, even an infinite stillness or an eternal silence.

But still, it may be said, these are in the end two different things, and this is shown by their difference of opposite results; for a resort to the passivity of Brahman leads to the cessation of this existence and a resort to the active Brahman leads to its continuance. But here too, let us observe that this distinction arises by a movement of the individual soul from one poise to another, from the poise of Brahman-consciousness in the world, where it is a fulcrum for the universal action, to or towards the poise of Brahman-consciousness beyond the world, where it is a power for the withholding of energy from the universal action. Moreover, if it is by energy of Tapas that the dispensing of force of being in the world-action is accomplished, it is equally by the energy of Tapas that the drawing back of that force of being is accomplished. The passive consciousness of Brahman and its active consciousness are not two *different, conflicting* and incompatible things; they are the same consciousness, the same energy, at one end in a state of self-reservation, at the other cast into a motion of self-giving and self-deploying, like the stillness of a reservoir and the coursing of the channels which flow from it. In fact, behind every activity there is and must be a passive power of being from which it arises, by which

it is supported, which even, we see in the end, governs it from behind without being totally identified with it, — in the sense at least of being itself all poured out into the action and indistinguishable from it. Such a self-exhausting identification is impossible; for no action, however vast, exhausts the original power from which it proceeds, leaving nothing behind it in reserve. When we get back into our own conscious being, when we stand back from our own action and see how it is done, we discover that it is our whole being which stands behind any particular act or sum of activities, passive in the rest of its integrality, active in its limited dispensation of energy; but that passivity is not an incapable inertia, it is a poise of self-reserved energy. A similar truth must apply still more completely to the conscious being of the Infinite, whose power, in silence of status as in creation, must also be infinite.

It is immaterial for the moment to inquire whether the passivity out of which all emerges is absolute or only relative to the observable action from which it holds back. It is enough to note that, though we make the distinction for the convenience of our minds, there is not a passive Brahman and an active Brahman, but one Brahman, an Existence which reserves Its Tapas in what we call passivity and gives Itself in what we call Its activity. For the purposes of action, these are two poles of one being or a double power necessary for creation; the action proceeds on its circuit from the reservation and returns to it, presumably, the energies that were derived, to be again thrown out in a fresh circuit. The passivity of Brahman is Tapas or concentration of Its being dwelling upon Itself in a self-absorbed concentration of Its immobile energy; the activity is Tapas of Its being releasing what It held out of that incubation into mobility and travelling in a million waves of action, dwelling still upon each as It travels and liberating in it the being's truths and potentialities. There too is a concentration of force, but a multiple concentration, which seems to us a diffusion. But it is not really a diffusion, but a deploying; Brahman does not cast Its energy out of Itself to be lost in some unreal exterior void, but keeps it at work within Its being, conserving it unabridged and undiminished in all its continual process of con-

version and transmutation. The passivity is a great conservation of Shakti, of Tapas supporting a manifold initiation of movement and transmutation into forms and happenings; the activity is a conservation of Shakti, of Tapas in the movement and transmutation. As in ourselves, so in Brahman, both are relative to each other, both simultaneously co-exist, pole and pole in the action of one Existence.

The Reality then is neither an eternal passivity of immobile Being nor an eternal activity of Being in movement, nor is It an alternation in Time between these two things. Neither in fact is the sole absolute truth of Brahman's reality; their opposition is only true of It in relation to the activities of Its consciousness. When we perceive Its deployment of the conscious energy of Its being in the universal action, we speak of It as the mobile active Brahman; when we perceive Its simultaneous reservation of the conscious energy of Its being kept back from the action, we speak of It as the immobile passive Brahman, — Saguna and Nirguna, Kshara and Akshara: otherwise the terms would have no meaning; for there is one reality and not two independent realities, one immobile, the other mobile. In the ordinary view of the soul's evolution into the action, *pravṛtti*, and its involution into the passivity, *nivṛtti*, it is supposed that in the action the individual soul becomes ignorant, nescient of its passive which is supposed to be its true being, and in the passivity it becomes finally nescient of its active which is supposed to be its false or only apparent being. But this is because these two movements take place alternately for us, as in our sleep and waking; we pass in waking into nescience of our sleeping condition, in sleep into nescience of our waking being. But this happens because only part of our being performs this alternative movement and we falsely think of ourselves as only that partial existence: but we can discover by a deeper psychological experience that the larger being in us is perfectly aware of all that happens even in what is to our partial and superficial being a state of unconsciousness; it is limited neither by sleep nor by waking. So it is in our relations with Brahman who is our real and integral being. In the ignorance we identify ourselves with only a partial consciousness, mental or spiritual-mental in its nature, which becomes

nescient of its self of status by movement; in this part of us, when we lose the movement, we lose at the same time our hold on our self of action by entering into passivity. By an entire passivity the mind falls asleep or enters into trance or else is liberated into a spiritual silence; but though it is a liberation from the ignorance of the partial being in its flux of action, it is earned by putting on a luminous nescience of the dynamic Reality or a luminous separation from it: the spiritual-mental being remains self-absorbed in a silent essential status of existence and becomes either incapable of active consciousness or repugnant to all activity; this release of silence is a status through which the soul passes in its journey towards the Absolute. But there is a greater fulfilment of our true and integral being in which both the static and the dynamic sides of the self are liberated and fulfilled in That which upholds both and is limited neither by action nor by silence.

For Brahman does not pass alternately from passivity to activity and back to passivity by cessation of Its dynamic force of being. If that were really true of the integral Reality, then, while the universe continued, there would be no passive Brahman in existence, all would be action, and, if our universe were dissolved, there would be no active Brahman, all would become cessation and immobile stillness. But this is not so, for we can become aware of an eternal passivity and self-concentrated calm penetrating and upholding all the cosmic activity and all its multiple concentrated movement, — and this could not be if, so long as any activity continued, the concentrated passivity did not exist supporting it and within it. Integral Brahman possesses both the passivity and the activity simultaneously and does not pass alternately from one to the other as from a sleep to a waking: it is only some partial activity in us which seems to do that, and we by identifying ourselves with that partial activity have the appearance of this alternation from one nescience to another nescience; but our true, our integral being is not subject to these opposites and it does not need to become unaware of its dynamic self in order to possess its self of silence. When we get the integral knowledge and the integral liberation of both soul and nature free from the disabilities of the restricted partial and ignorant being, we too can possess the passivity and the activity with a simultaneous

possession, exceeding both these poles of the universality, limited by neither of these powers of the Self in its relation or non-relation to Nature.

The Supreme, it has been declared in the Gita, exceeds both the immobile self and the mobile being; even put together they do not represent all he is. For obviously we do not mean, when we speak of his possessing them simultaneously, that he is the sum of a passivity and an activity, an integer made of those two fractions, passive with three fourths of himself, active with one fourth of his existence. In that case, Brahman might be a sum of nesciences, the passive three fourths not only indifferent to but quite ignorant of all that the activity is doing, the active one fourth quite unaware of the passivity and unable to possess it except by ceasing from action. Even, Brahman the sum might amount to something quite different from his two fractions, something, as it were, up and aloof, ignorant of and irresponsible for anything which some mystic Maya was at once obstinately doing and rigidly abstaining from doing in the two fractions of his existence. But it is clear that Brahman the Supreme Being must be aware both of the passivity and the activity and regard them not as his absolute being, but as opposite, yet, mutually satisfying terms of his universalities. It cannot be true that Brahman, by an eternal passivity, is unaware, entirely separated from his own activities; free, he contains them in himself, supports them with his eternal power of calm, initiates them from his eternal poise of energy. It must be equally untrue that Brahman in his activity is unaware of or separated from his passivity; omnipresent, he is there supporting the action, possesses it always in the heart of the movement and is eternally calm and still and free and blissful in all the whirl of its energies. Nor in either silence or action can he be at all unaware of his absolute being, but knows that all he expresses through them draws its value and power from the power of that absolute existence. If it seems otherwise to our experience, it is because we identify with one aspect and by that exclusiveness fail to open ourselves to the integral Reality.

There necessarily follows an important first result, already arrived at from other viewpoints, that the Ignorance cannot have the origin of its existence or the starting-point of its dividing

activities in the absolute Brahman or in integral Sachchidananda; it belongs only to a partial action of the being with which we identify ourselves, just as in the body we identify ourselves with that partial and superficial consciousness which alternates between sleep and waking: it is indeed this identification putting aside all the rest of the Reality behind us that is the constituting cause of the Ignorance. And if Ignorance is not an element or power proper to the absolute nature of the Brahman or to Its integrality, there can be no original and primal Ignorance. Maya, if it be an original power of the consciousness of the Eternal, cannot itself be an ignorance or in any way akin to the nature of ignorance, but must be a transcendent and universal power of self-knowledge and all-knowledge; ignorance can only intervene as a minor and subsequent movement, partial and relative. Is it then something inherent in the multiplicity of souls? Does it come into being immediately Brahman views himself in the multiplicity, and does that multiplicity consist of a sum of souls each in its very nature fractional and divided from all the others in consciousness, unable to become aware of them at all except as things external to it, linked at most by communication from body to body or mind to mind, but incapable of unity? But we have seen that this is only what we seem to be in our most superficial layer of consciousness, the external mind and the physical; when we get back into a subtler, deeper, larger action of our consciousness, we find the walls of division becoming thinner and in the end there is left no wall of division, no Ignorance.

Body is the outward sign and lowest basis of the apparent division which Nature plunging into ignorance and self-nescience makes the starting-point for the recovery of unity by the individual soul, unity even in the midst of the most exaggerated forms of her multiple consciousness. Bodies cannot communicate with each other except by external means and through a gulf of externality; cannot penetrate each other except by division of the penetrated body or by taking advantage of some gap in it, some pre-existent division; cannot unite except by a breaking up and devouring, a swallowing and absorption and so an assimilation, or at most a fusion in which both forms disappear. Mind too, when identified with body, is hampered by its limitations; but in

itself it is more subtle and two minds can penetrate each other without hurt or division, can interchange their substance without mutual injury, can in a way become parts of each other: still mind too has its own form which is separative of it from other minds and is apt to take its stand on this separateness. When we get back to soul-consciousness, the obstacles to unity lessen and finally cease to exist altogether. The soul can in its consciousness identify itself with other souls, can contain them and enter into and be contained by them, can realise its unity with them; and this can take place, not in a featureless and indistinguishable sleep, not in a Nirvana in which all distinctions and individualities of soul and mind and body are lost, but in a perfect waking which observes and takes account of all distinctions but exceeds them.

Therefore ignorance and self-limiting division are not inherent and insuperable in the multiplicity of souls, are not the very nature of the multiplicity of Brahman. Brahman, as he exceeds the passivity and the activity, so too exceeds the unity and multiplicity. He is one in himself, but not with a self-limiting unity exclusive of the power of multiplicity, such as is the separated unity of the body and the mind; he is not the mathematical integer, one, which is incapable of containing the hundred and is therefore less than the hundred. He contains the hundred, is one in all the hundred. One in himself, he is one in the many and the many are one in him. In other words, Brahman in his unity of spirit is aware of his multiplicity of souls and in the consciousness of his multiple souls is aware of the unity of all souls. In each soul he, the immanent Spirit, the Lord in each heart, is aware of his oneness. The Jivatman illumined by him, aware of its unity with the One, is also aware of its unity with the many. Our superficial consciousness, identified with body and with divided life and dividing mind, is ignorant; but that also can be illumined and made aware. Multiplicity, then, is not the necessary cause of the ignorance.

Ignorance, as we have already stated, comes in at a later stage, as a later movement, when mind is separated from its spiritual and supramental basis, and culminates in this earth-life where the individual consciousness in the many identifies itself by dividing mind with the form, which is the only safe basis of

division. But what is the form? It is, at least as we see it here, a formation of concentrated energy, a knot of the force of consciousness in its movement, a knot maintained in being by a constant whirl of action; but whatever transcendent truth or reality it proceeds from or expresses, it is not in any part of itself in manifestation durable or eternal. It is not eternal in its integrality, nor in its constituting atoms; for they can be disintegrated by dissolving the knot of energy in constant concentrated action which is the sole thing that maintains their apparent stability. It is a concentration of Tapas in movement of force on the form maintaining it in being which sets up the physical basis of division. But all things in the activity are, we have seen, a concentration of Tapas in movement of force upon its object. The origin of the Ignorance must then be sought for in some self-absorbed concentration of Tapas, of Conscious-Force in action on a separate movement of the Force; to us this takes the appearance of mind identifying itself with the separate movement and identifying itself also in the movement separately with each of the forms resulting from it. So it builds a wall of separation which shuts out the consciousness in each form from awareness of its own total self, of other embodied consciousnesses and of universal being. It is here that we must look for the secret of the apparent ignorance of the embodied mental being as well as of the great apparent inconscience of physical Nature. We have to ask ourselves what is the nature of this absorbing, this separating, this self-forgetful concentration which is the obscure miracle of the universe.

CHAPTER XIII

Exclusive Concentration of Consciousness-Force and the Ignorance

> From the kindled fire of Energy of Consciousness, Truth was born and the Law of Truth ; from that the Night, from the Night the flowing ocean of being.
>
> *Rig Veda.*[1]

SINCE Brahman is in the essentiality of its universal being a unity and a multiplicity aware of each other and in each other and since in its reality it is something beyond the One and the Many, containing both, aware of both, Ignorance can only come about as a subordinate phenomenon by some concentration of consciousness absorbed in a part knowledge or a part action of the being and excluding the rest from its awareness. There may be either a concentration of the One in itself to the exclusion of the Many or of the Many in their own action to the exclusion of the all-awareness of the One, or of the individual being in himself to the exclusion both of the One and the rest of the Many who are then to him separated units not included in his direct awareness. Or again there may be or there may intervene at a certain point some general rule of exclusive concentration, operative in all these three directions, a concentration of separative active consciousness in a separative movement; but this takes place not in the true self, but in the force of active being, in Prakriti.

This hypothesis we adopt in preference to the others, because none of the others taken by itself will hold or will square with all the facts of existence. Integral Brahman cannot be in its integrality the source of the Ignorance, because its integrality is in its very nature all-consciousness. The One cannot in its integral conscious being exclude the Many from itself, because the Many would not then at all exist; at most it can stand back somewhere in its consciousness from the cosmic play so as to enable

[1] X. 190. 1.

a similar movement in the individual being. The Many in the integrality or in each self of the Many cannot be really ignorant of the One or of others, because by the Many we mean the same divine Self in all, individualised indeed, but still one in conscious being with all in a single universality and one too with the original and transcendent Being. Ignorance is therefore not the natural character of the consciousness of the soul, even of the individual soul; it is the outcome of some particularising action in the executive Conscious-Force when it is absorbed in its works and forgetful of self and of the total reality of the nature. This action cannot be that of the whole being or of the whole force of being, — for the character of that completeness is whole consciousness and not partial consciousness, — it must be a superficial or partial movement absorbed in a superficial or partial action of the consciousness and the energy, concentrated in its formation, oblivious of all else that is not included in the formation or not there overtly operative. Ignorance is Nature's purposeful oblivion of the Self and the All, leaving them aside, putting them behind herself in order to do solely what she has to do in some outer play of existence.

In the infinity of being and its infinite awareness concentration of consciousness, Tapas, is always present as an inherent power of Consciousness-Force: it is a self-held or self-gathered dwelling of the eternal Awareness in itself and on itself or on its object; but the object is always in some way itself, its own being or a manifestation and movement of its being. The concentration may be essential; it may be even a sole indwelling or an entire absorption in the essence of its own being, a luminous or else a self-oblivious self-immersion. Or it may be an integral or else a total-multiple or a part-multiple concentration. Or it may be a single separative regard on one field of its being or movement, a single-pointed concentration in one centre or an absorption in one objective form of its self-existence. The first, the essential, is at one end the superconscient Silence and at the other end the Inconscience; the second, the integral, is the total consciousness of Sachchidananda, the supramental concentration; the third, the multiple, is the method of the totalising or global overmental awareness; the fourth, the separative, is the characteristic nature

of the Ignorance. The supreme integrality of the Absolute holds all these states or powers of its consciousness together as a single indivisible being looking at all itself in manifestation with a simultaneous self-vision.

Concentration in this sense of self-held dwelling in itself or on itself as object may be said then to belong to the very nature of conscious being. For, although there is an infinite extension of consciousness and a diffusion of consciousness, it is a self-held self-contained extension or a self-held self-contained diffusion. Although there may seem to be a dispersion of its energies, that is in reality a form of distribution, and is only possible in a superficial field because it is supported by an underlying self-held concentration. An exclusive concentration on or in a single subject or object or domain of being or movement is not a denial or departure from the Spirit's awareness, it is one form of the self-gathering of the power of Tapas. But when the concentration is exclusive, it brings about a holding back behind it of the rest of self-knowledge. It may be aware of the rest all the time, yet act as if it were not aware of it; that would not be a state or act of Ignorance: but if the consciousness erects by the concentration a wall of exclusion limiting itself to a single field, domain or habitation in the movement so that it is aware only of that or aware of all the rest as outside itself, then we have a principle of self-limiting knowledge which can result in a separative knowledge and culminate in a positive and effective ignorance.

We can get some glimpse of what this means, to what it amounts in action, when we look at the nature of exclusive concentration in mental man, in our own consciousness. First of all, we must note that what we mean ordinarily by the man is not his inner self, but only a sum of apparent continuous movement of consciousness and energy in past, present and future to which we give this name. It is this that in appearance does all the works of the man, thinks all his thoughts, feels all his emotions. This energy is a movement of Consciousness-Force concentrated on a temporal stream of inward and outward workings. But we know that behind this stream of energy there is a whole sea of consciousness which is aware of the stream, but of which the

stream is unaware; for this sum of surface energy is a selection, an outcome from all the rest that is invisible. That sea is the subliminal self, the superconscient, the subconscient, the intraconscient and circumconscient being, and holding it all together the soul, the psychic entity. The stream is the natural, the superficial man. In this superficial man Tapas, the being's dynamic force of consciousness, is concentrated on the surface in a certain mass of superficial workings; all the rest of itself it has put behind and may be vaguely aware of it there in the unformulated back of its conscious existence, but is not aware of it in this superficial absorbed movement in front. It is not precisely, at any rate in that back or in the depths, ignorant of itself in any essential sense of the word, but for the purposes of its superficial movement and within that movement only it is oblivious of its real, its greater self, by absorption, by exclusive concentration on what it is superficially doing. Yet it is really the hidden sea and not the superficial stream which is doing all the action: it is the sea that is the source of this movement, not the conscious wave it throws up, whatever the consciousness of the wave, absorbed in its movement, living in that, seeing nothing else but that, may think about the matter. And that sea, the real self, the integral conscious being, the integral force of being, is not ignorant; even the wave is not essentially ignorant, — for it contains within itself all the consciousness it has forgotten and but for that it could not act or endure at all, — but it is self-oblivious, absorbed in its own movement, too absorbed to note anything else than the movement while that continues to preoccupy it. A limited practical self-oblivion, not an essential and binding self-ignorance, is the nature of this exclusive concentration which is yet the root of that which works as the Ignorance.

So too we see that man, though a really indivisible stream of Tapas, of conscious energy in Time, capable of acting in the present only by the sum of his past force of working, creating already his future by his past and his present action, yet lives absorbed in the present moment, lives from moment to moment, and is therefore in this superficial action of consciousness, ignorant of his future and ignorant of his past except for that small

part of it which at any moment he may recall to him by memory. He does not, however, live in the past; what he recalls is not the past itself, but only the ghost of it, a conceptual shadow of a reality which is now to him dead, non-existent, no longer in being. But all this is an action of the superficial ignorance. The true consciousness within is not unaware of its past; it holds it there, not necessarily in memory but in being, still active, living, ready with its fruits, and sends it up from time to time in memory or more concretely in result of past action or past causes to the superficial conscious being, — that is indeed the true rationale of what is called Karma. It is or can be aware too of the future, for there is somewhere in the inner being a field of cognition open to future knowledge, a prospective as well as a retrospective Time-sense, Time-vision, Time-perception; something in it lives indivisibly in the three times and contains all their apparent divisions, holds the future ready for manifestation within it. Here, then, in this habit of living in the present, we have a second absorption, a second exclusive concentration which complicates and farther limits the being, but simplifies the apparent course of the action by relating it not to the whole infinite course of Time, but to a definite succession of moments.

Therefore in his superficial consciousness man is to himself dynamically, practically, the man of the moment, not the man of the past who once was but is no longer in existence, nor the man of the future who is not yet in being; it is by memory that he links himself with the one, by anticipation with the other: a continuous ego-sense runs through the three times, but this is a centralising mental construction, not an essential or an extended existence containing what was, is and will be. An intuition of self is behind it, but that is an underlying identity, unaffected by the changes of his personality; in his surface formation of being he is not that but what he is at the moment. Yet all the time this existence in the moment is not the real or the whole truth of his being, but only a practical or pragmatic truth for the purposes of the superficial movement of his life and within its limits. It is a truth, not an unreality, but a truth only in its positive part; in its negative parts it is an ignorance, and this negative ignorance limits and often distorts even the practical truth, so that the conscious

life of man proceeds according to an ignorance, a partial, a half-true half-false knowledge, not according to the real truth of himself of which he is oblivious. Yet because his real self is the true determinator and governs all secretly from behind, it is after all a knowledge behind which really determines the formed course of his existence; the superficial ignorance erects a necessary limiting outline and supplies the factors by which the outward colour and turn needed for his present human life and his present moment are given to his consciousness and his action. In the same way and for the same reason man identifies himself solely with the name and form he wears in his present existence; he is ignorant of his past before birth even as of his future after death. Yet all that he forgets is contained, present and effective, in the all-retaining integral consciousness within him.

There is a minor pragmatic use of exclusive concentration on the surface which may also give us an indication in spite of its temporary character. The superficial man living from moment to moment plays, as it were, several parts in his present life and, while he is busy with each part, he is capable of an exclusive concentration, an absorption in it, by which he forgets the rest of himself, puts it behind him for the moment, is to that extent self-oblivious. The man is for the moment the actor, the poet, the soldier or whatever else he may have been constituted and formed into by some peculiar and characteristic action of his force of being, his Tapas, his past conscious energy and by the action which develops from it. Not only is he apt to deliver himself up to this exclusive concentration in a part of himself for the time being, but his success in the action very largely depends on the completeness with which he can thus put aside the rest of himself and live only in his immediate work. Yet all the time we can see that it is the whole man who is really doing the action and not merely this particular part of him; what he does, the way he does it, the elements he brings into it, the stamp he gives to his work depends on his whole character, mind, information, genius, all that the past of him has made him, — and not his past in this life only, but in other lives, and again not only his past, but the past, the present and the predestined future both of himself and the world around him are the determinants of his work. The

present actor, poet or soldier in him is only a separative determination of his Tapas; it is his force of being organised for a particular kind of action of its energy, a separative movement of Tapas, which is able, — and this ability is not a weakness, a deficiency, but a great power of the consciousness, — to absorb itself in that particular working to the temporary self-oblivion of the rest of itself, even though that rest is present all the time at the back of the consciousness and in the work itself and is active or has its influence in the shaping of the work. This active self-oblivion of the man in his work and the part he plays, differs from the other, the deeper self-oblivion, in that the wall of separation is less phenomenally and not at all enduringly complete; the mind can dissolve its concentration and go back from its work at any time to the consciousness of the larger self of which this was a partial action. The superficial or apparent man cannot so go back at will to the real man within him; he can only do it to some extent abnormally or supernormally in exceptional conditions of his mentality or, more permanently and completely, as the fruit of a long and arduous self-training, self-deepening, self-heightening, self-expansion. Still he can go back; therefore the difference is phenomenal only, not essential: it is, in essence, in both cases the same movement of exclusive concentration, of absorption in a particular aspect of himself, action, movement of force, though with different circumstances and another manner of working.

This power of exclusive concentration is not confined to absorption in a particular character or type of working of one's larger self, but extends to a complete self-forgetfulness in the particular action in which we happen at the moment to be engaged. The actor in moments of great intensity forgets that he is an actor and becomes the part that he is playing on the stage; not that he really thinks himself Rama or Ravana, but that he identifies himself for the time being with the form of character and action which the name represents and so completely as to forget the real man who is playing it. So the poet forgets himself, the man, the worker, in his work and is for the moment only the inspired impersonal energy which works itself out in formation of word and rhythm; of all else he is oblivious. The soldier forgets himself in the act and becomes the charge and the fury and the slaying. In

the same way the man who is overcome by intense anger, forgets himself as it is commonly said, or as it has been still more aptly and forcibly put, becomes anger: and these terms express a real truth which is not the whole truth of the man's being at the time, but a practical fact of his conscious energy in action. He does forget himself, forgets all the rest of himself with its other impulses and powers of self-restraint and self-direction, so that he acts simply as the energy of the passion which preoccupies him, becomes that energy for the time being. This is as far as self-forgetfulness can go in the normal active human psychology; for it must return soon to the wider self-aware consciousness of which this self-forgetfulness is only a temporary movement.

But in the larger universal consciousness there must be a power of carrying this movement to its absolute point, to the greatest extreme possible for any relative movement to reach, and this point is reached, not in human unconsciousness which is not abiding and always refers back to the awakened conscious being that man normally and characteristically is, but in the inconscience of material Nature. This inconscience is no more real than the ignorance of exclusive concentration in our temporary being which limits the waking consciousness of man; for as in us, so in the atom, the metal, the plant, in every form of material Nature, in every energy of material Nature, there is, we know, a secret soul, a secret will, a secret intelligence at work, other than the mute self-oblivious form, the Conscient, — conscient even in unconscious things, — of the Upanishad, without whose presence and informing Conscious-Force or Tapas no work of Nature could be done. What is inconscient there is the Prakriti, the formal, the motional action of the energy absorbed in the working, identified with it, to such an extent as to be bound in a sort of trance or swoon of concentration, unable to go back, while imprisoned in that form, to its real self, to the integral conscious being and the integral force of conscious being which it has put behind it, of which in its ecstatic trance of mere working and energy it has become oblivious. Prakriti, the executive Force, becomes unaware of Purusha, the Conscious Being, holds him hidden within herself and becomes again slowly aware only with the emergence of consciousness from this swoon of the Inconscience. Purusha

indeed consents to assume the apparent form of itself which Prakriti constructs for it; it seems to become the Inconscient, the physical being, the vital being, the mental being: but in all these it remains still in reality itself; the light of the secret conscious Being supports and informs the action of the inconscient or emergingly conscious energy of Nature.

The inconscience is superficial like the ignorance of the waking human mind or the inconscience or subconscience of his sleeping mind, and within it is the All-conscient; it is entirely phenomenal, but it is the complete phenomenon. So complete is it that it is only by an impulsion of evolutionary consciousness emerging into other forms less imprisoned by this inconscient method of working that it can come back to itself, recover in the animal a partial awareness, then in man at his highest some possibility of approach to a first more complete though still superficial initiation of a truly conscious working. But still, as in the case of the superficial and the real man where there is also a similar though lesser inability, the difference is phenomenal only. Essentially, in the universal order of things, the inconscience of material Nature is the same exclusive concentration, the same absorption in the work and the energy as in the self-limitation of the waking human mind, or the concentration of the self-forgetting mind in its working; it is only that self-limitation carried to a farthest point of self-forgetfulness which becomes, not a temporary action, but the law of its action. Nescience in Nature is the complete self-ignorance; the partial knowledge and general ignorance of man is a partial self-ignorance marking in her evolutionary order a return towards self-knowledge: but both are and all ignorance is, when examined, a superficially exclusive self-forgetful concentration of Tapas, of the conscious energy of being in a particular line or section of its movement of which alone it is aware or which alone it seems to be on the surface. The ignorance is effective within the bounds of that movement and valid for its purposes, but phenomenal, partial, superficial, not essentially real, not integral. We have to use the word "real" necessarily in a quite limited and not in its absolute sense; for the ignorance is real enough, but it is not the whole truth of our being and by regarding it by itself even its truth is misrepresented to our

outer awareness. In that true truth of itself it is an involved Consciousness and Knowledge evolving back to itself, but it is dynamically effective as an Inconscience and an Ignorance.

This being the root-nature of the Ignorance, a practical truth of a phenomenally but not really dividing, of a limiting and separative conscious energy absorbed in its works to the apparent forgetfulness of its integral and real self, we may answer the questions that arise of the why, the where and the how of this movement. The reason for the Ignorance, its necessity, becomes clear enough once we have seen that without it the object of the manifestation of our world would be impossible, could not be done at all, or not completely, or not in the way in which it should be and is done. Each side of the manifold Ignorance has its justification, which is only a part of the one general necessity. Man, living in his timeless being, could not have thrown himself into the stream of Time with that movement of subjection to its flux from moment to moment which is the nature of his present living. Living in his superconscient or subliminal self, he could not have worked out from the knot of his individual mentality the relations which he has to ravel and unravel with the world about him, or would have to do it in a radically different fashion. Living in the universal self and not in the egoistic separative consciousness, he could not evolve that separate action, personality, outlook from himself as the sole or the initial centre and point of reference which is the contribution of the ego-sense to the world-workings. He has to put on the temporal, the psychological, the egoistic ignorance in order to protect himself against the light of the infinite and the largeness of the universal, so as to develop behind this defence his temporal individuality in the cosmos. He has to live as if in this one life and put on the ignorance of his infinite past and his future: for otherwise, if the past were present to him, he could not work out his present selected relations with his environment in the way intended; his knowledge would be too great for him, it would necessarily alter the whole spirit and balance and form of his action. He has to live in the mind absorbed by this bodily life and not in the Supermind; for otherwise all these protecting walls of ignorance created by the limiting, dividing, differentiating power of

mind would not be built or would become too thin and transparent for his purpose.

That purpose for which all this exclusive concentration we call the Ignorance is necessary, is to trace the cycle of self-oblivion and self-discovery for the joy of which the Ignorance is assumed in Nature by the secret spirit. It is not that all cosmic manifestation would otherwise become impossible; but it would be a quite different manifestation from the one in which we live; it would be confined to the higher worlds of the divine Existence or to a typal non-evolving cosmos where each being lived in the whole light of its own law of nature, and this obverse manifestation, this evolving cycle, would be impossible. What is here the goal would be then the eternal condition; what is here a stage would be the perpetuated type of existence. It is to find himself in the apparent opposites of his being and his nature that Sachchidananda descends into the material Nescience and puts on its phenomenal ignorance as a superficial mask in which he hides himself from his own conscious energy, leaving it self-forgetful and absorbed in its works and forms. It is in those forms that the slowly awaking soul has to accept the phenomenal action of an ignorance which is really knowledge awaking progressively out of the original nescience, and it is in the new conditions created by these workings that it has to rediscover itself and divinely transform by that light the life which is thus labouring to fulfil the purpose of its descent into the Inconscience. Not to return as speedily as may be to heavens where perfect light and joy are eternal or to the supracosmic bliss is the object of this cosmic cycle, nor merely to repeat a purposeless round in a long unsatisfactory groove of ignorance seeking for knowledge and never finding it perfectly, — in that case the ignorance would be either an inexplicable blunder of the All-conscient or a painful and purposeless Necessity equally inexplicable, — but to realise the Ananda of the Self in other conditions than the supracosmic, in cosmic being, and to find its heaven of joy and light even in the oppositions offered by the terms of an embodied material existence, by struggle therefore towards the joy of self-discovery, would seem to be the true object of the birth of the soul in the human body and of the

labour of the human race in the series of its cycles. The Ignorance is a necessary, though quite subordinate term which the universal Knowledge has imposed on itself that that movement might be possible, — not a blunder and a fall, but a purposeful descent, not a curse, but a divine opportunity. To find and embody the All-Delight in an intense summary of its manifoldness, to achieve a possibility of the infinite Existence which could not be achieved in other conditions, to create out of Matter a temple of the Divinity would seem to be the task imposed on the spirit born into the material universe.

The ignorance, we see, is not in the secret soul, but in the apparent Prakriti; nor does it belong to the whole of that Prakriti, — it cannot, for Prakriti is the action of the All-conscient, — but arises in some development from its original integrality of light and power. Where does that development take place, in what principle of being does it find its opportunity and starting-point? Not, certainly, in the infinite being, the infinite consciousness, the infinite delight which are the supreme planes of existence and from which all else derives or descends into this obscurer ambiguous manifestation. There it can have no place. Not in the Supermind; for in the Supermind the infinite light and power are always present even in the most finite workings, and the consciousness of unity embraces the consciousness of diversity. It is on the plane of mind that this putting back of the real self-consciousness becomes possible. For mind is that power of the conscious being which differentiates and runs along the lines of differentiation with the sense of diversity prominent and characteristic and the sense of unity behind it only, not characteristic, not the very stuff of its workings. If by any chance this supporting sense of unity could be drawn back, — it is possessed by mind not in its own separate right, but because it has the Supermind behind it, because it reflects the light of the Supermind of which it is a derivative and secondary power, — if a veil could fall between mind and Supermind shutting off the light of the Truth or letting it come through only in rays diffused, scattered, reflected but with distortion and division, then the phenomenon of the Ignorance would intervene. Such a veil exists, says the Upanishad, constituted by the action of

Mind itself: it is in Overmind a golden lid which hides the face of the supramental Truth but reflects its image; in Mind it becomes a more opaque and smoky-luminous coverture. That action is the absorbed looking downward of Mind on the diversity which is its characteristic movement and away from the supreme unity which that diversity expresses, until it forgets altogether to remember and support itself by the unity. Even then the unity supports it and makes its activities possible, but the absorbed Energy is unaware of its own origin and greater, real self. Since Mind forgets that from which it derived, because of absorption in the workings of formative Energy, it becomes so far identified with that Energy as to lose hold even on itself, to become totally oblivious in a trance of work which it still supports in its somnambulist action, but of which it is no longer aware. This is the last stage of the descent of consciousness, an abysmal sleep, a fathomless trance of consciousness which is the profound basis of the action of material Nature.

It must be remembered, however, that when we speak of a partial movement of Consciousness-Force absorbed in its forms and actions, in a limited field of its working, this does not imply any real division of its integrality. The putting of the rest of itself behind it has only the effect of making all that rest occult to the frontal immediately active energy in the limited field of movement, but not of shutting it out of the field; in fact the integral Force is there though veiled by the Inconscience, and it is that integral Force supported by the integral self-being which through its frontal energy does all the work and inhabits all the forms created by the movement. It is to be noted also that in order to remove the veil of the Ignorance the conscious Force of being in us uses a reverse action of its power of exclusive concentration; it quiets the frontal movement of Prakriti in the individual consciousness and concentrates exclusively on the concealed inner being, — on the Self or on the true inner, psychic or mental or vital being, the Purusha, — to disclose it. But when it has done so, it need not remain in this opposite exclusiveness; it can resume its integral consciousness or a global consciousness which includes both being of Purusha and action of Prakriti, the

soul and its instruments, the Self and the dynamisms of the Self-Power, *ātmaśakti:* it can then embrace its manifestation with a larger consciousness free from the previous limitation, free from the results of Nature's forgetfulness of the indwelling Spirit. Or it may quiet the whole working it has manifested, concentrate on a higher level of Self and Nature, raise the being to it and bring down the powers of the higher level to transform the previous manifestation: all that is so transformed is still included, but as a part of the higher dynamism and its higher values, in a new and greater self-creation. This is what can happen when the Consciousness-Force in our being decides to raise its evolution from the mental to the supramental level. In each case it is Tapas that is effective, but it acts in a different manner according to the thing that has to be done, according to the predetermined process, dynamism, self-deploying of the Infinite.

But still, even if this is the mechanism of the Ignorance, it may be asked whether it does not remain a mystery how the All-conscient could, though in only a partial action of his conscious energy, succeed in arriving at even this superficial ignorance and inconscience. Even if it were so, it would be worth-while to fix the exact action of this mystery, its nature, its limits, so that we may not be appalled by it and misled from the real purpose it serves and the opportunity it gives. But the mystery is a fiction of the dividing intellect which, because it finds or creates a logical opposition between two concepts, thinks there is a real opposition of the two facts observed and therefore an impossibility of co-existence and unity between them. This Ignorance is, as we have seen, really a power of the Knowledge to limit itself, to concentrate itself on the work in hand, an exclusive concentration in practice which does not prevent the full existence and working of the whole conscious being behind, but a working in the conditions chosen and self-imposed on the nature. All conscious self-limitation is a power for its special purpose, not a weakness; all concentration is a force of conscious being, not a disability. It is true that while the Supermind is capable of an integral, comprehensive, multiple, infinite self-concentration, this is dividing

and limited; it is true also that it creates perverse as well as partial and, in so far, false or only half-true values of things: but we have seen the object of the limitation and of this partiality of knowledge; and the object being admitted, the power to fulfil it must be admitted also in the absolute force of the absolute Being. This power of self-limitation for a particular working, instead of being incompatible with the absolute conscious-force of that Being, is precisely one of the powers we should expect to exist among the manifold energies of the Infinite.

The Absolute is not really limited by putting forth in itself a cosmos of relations; it is the natural play of its absolute being, consciousness, force, self-delight. The Infinite is not limited by building up in itself an infinite series of interplaying finite phenomena; rather that is its natural self-expression. The One is not limited by its capacity for multiplicity in which it enjoys variously its own being; rather that is part of the true description of an infinite as opposed to a rigid, finite and conceptual unity. So too the Ignorance, considered as a power of manifoldly self-absorbed and self-limiting concentration of the conscious being, is a natural capacity of variation in his self-conscious knowledge, one of the possible poises of relation of the Absolute in its manifestation, of the Infinite in its series of finite workings, of the One in its self-enjoyment in the Many. The power by self-absorption to become unaware of the world which yet at the same time continues in the being, is one extreme of this capacity of consciousness; the power by absorption in the cosmic workings to become ignorant of the self which all the time is carrying on those workings, is the reverse extreme. But neither really limits the integral self-aware existence of Sachchidananda which is superior to these apparent oppositions; even in their opposition they help to express and manifest the Ineffable.

CHAPTER XIV

The Origin and Remedy of Falsehood, Error, Wrong and Evil

The Lord accepts the sin and the virtue of none ; because knowledge is veiled by Ignorance, mortal men are deluded.

Gita.[1]

They live according to another idea of self than the reality, deluded, attached, expressing a falsehood, — as if by an enchantment they see the false as the true.

Maitrayani Upanishad.[2]

They live and move in the Ignorance and go round and round, battered and stumbling, like blind men led by one who is blind.

Mundaka Upanishad.[3]

One whose intelligence has attained to Unity, casts away from him both sin and virtue.

Gita.[4]

He who has found the bliss of the Eternal is afflicted no more by the thought, "Why have I not done the good? Why have I done evil?" One who knows the self extricates himself from both these things.

Taittiriya Upanishad.[5]

These are they who are conscious of the much falsehood in the world; they grow in the house of Truth, they are the strong and invincible sons of Infinity.

Rig Veda.[6]

The first and the highest are truth; in the middle there is falsehood, but it is taken between the truth on both sides of it and it draws its being from the truth.[7]

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.[8]

IF IGNORANCE is in its nature a self-limiting knowledge oblivious of the integral self-awareness and confined to an exclusive concentration in a single field or upon a concealing surface of cosmic movement, what, in this view, are we to make

[1] V. 15. [2] VII. 10. [3] I. 2. 8. [4] II. 50. [5] II. 9. [6] VII. 60. 5.

[7] The truth of the physical reality and the truth of the spiritual and superconscient reality. Into the intermediate subjective and mental realities which stand between them, falsehood can enter, but it takes either truth from above or truth from below as the substance out of which it builds itself and both are pressing upon it to turn its misconstructions into truth of life and truth of spirit. [8] V. 5. 1.

of the problem which most poignantly preoccupies the mind of man when it is turned on the mystery of his own existence and of cosmic existence, the problem of evil? A limited knowledge supported by a secret All-Wisdom as an instrument for working out within the necessary limitations a restricted world-order may be admitted as an intelligible process of the universal Consciousness and Energy; but the necessity of falsehood and error, the necessity of wrong and evil or their utility in the workings of the omnipresent Divine Reality is less easily admissible. And yet if that Reality is what we have supposed it to be, there must be some necessity for the appearance of these contrary phenomena, some significance, some function that they had to serve in the economy of the universe. For in the complete and inalienable self-knowledge of the Brahman which is necessarily all-knowledge, since all this that is is the Brahman, such phenomena cannot have come in as a chance, an intervening accident, an involuntary forgetfulness or confusion of the Consciousness-Force of the All-Wise in the cosmos or an ugly contretemps for which the indwelling Spirit was not prepared and of which it is the prisoner erring in a labyrinth with the utmost difficulty of escape. Nor can it be an inexplicable mystery of being, original and eternal, of which the divine All-Teacher is incapable of giving an account to himself or to us. There must be behind it a significance of the All-Wisdom itself, a power of the All-Consciousness which permits and uses it for some indispensable function in the present workings of our self-experience and world-experience. This aspect of existence needs now to be examined more directly and determined in its origins and the limits of its reality and its place in Nature.

This problem may be taken up from three points of view, — its relation to the Absolute, the supreme Reality, its origin and place in the cosmic workings, its action and point of hold in the individual being. It is evident that these contrary phenomena have no direct root in the supreme Reality itself, there is nothing there that has this character; they are creations of the Ignorance and Inconscience, not fundamental or primary aspects of the Being, not native to the Transcendence or to the infinite power of the Cosmic Spirit. It is sometimes reasoned that as Truth and

Good have their absolutes, so Falsehood and Evil must also have their absolutes, or, if it is not so, then both must belong to the relativity only; Knowledge and Ignorance, Truth and Falsehood, Good and Evil exist only in relation to each other and beyond the dualities here they have no existence. But this is not the fundamental truth of the relation of these opposites; for, in the first place, Falsehood and Evil are, unlike Truth and Good, very clearly results of the Ignorance and cannot exist where there is no Ignorance: they can have no self-existence in the Divine Being, they cannot be native elements of the Supreme Nature. If, then, the limited Knowledge which is the nature of Ignorance renounces its limitations, if Ignorance disappears into Knowledge, evil and falsehood can no longer endure: for both are fruits of unconsciousness and wrong consciousness and, if true or whole consciousness is there replacing Ignorance, they have no longer any basis for their existence. There can therefore be no absolute of falsehood, no absolute of evil; these things are a by-product of the world-movement: the sombre flowers of falsehood and suffering and evil have their root in the black soil of the Inconscient. On the other hand, there is no such intrinsic obstacle to the absoluteness of Truth and Good: the relativity of truth and error, good and evil is a fact of our experience, but it is similarly a by-product, it is not a permanent factor native to existence; for it is true only of the valuations made by the human consciousness, true only of our partial knowledge and partial ignorance.

Truth is relative to us because our knowledge is surrounded by ignorance. Our exact vision stops short at outside appearances which are not the complete truth of things, and, if we go deeper, the illuminations we arrive at are guesses or inferences or intimations, not a sight of indubitable realities: our conclusions are partial, speculative or constructed, our statement of them, which is the expression of our indirect contact with the reality, has the nature of representations or figures, word-images of thought-perceptions that are themselves images, not embodiments of Truth itself, not directly real and authentic. These figures or representations are imperfect and opaque and carry with them their shadow of nescience or error; for they seem to deny or shut

out other truths and even the truth they express does not get its full value: it is an end or edge of it that projects into form and the rest is left in the shadow unseen or disfigured or uncertainly visible. It might almost be said that no mental statement of things can be altogether true; it is not Truth bodied, pure and nude, but a draped figure, — often it is only the drapery that is visible. But this character does not apply to truth perceived by a direct action of consciousness or to the truth of knowledge by identity; our seeing there may be limited, but so far as it extends, it is authentic, and authenticity is a first step towards absoluteness: error may attach itself to a direct or identical vision of things by a mental accretion, by a mistaken or illegitimate extension or by the mind's misinterpretation, but it does not enter into the substance. This authentic or identical vision or experience of things is the true nature of knowledge and it is self-existent within the being, although rendered in our minds by a secondary formation that is unauthentic and derivative. Ignorance in its origin has not this self-existence or this authenticity; it exists by a limitation or absence or abeyance of knowledge, error by a deviation from truth, falsehood by a distortion of truth or its contradiction and denial. But it cannot be similarly said of knowledge that in its very nature it exists only by a limitation or absence or abeyance of ignorance: it may indeed emerge in the human mind partly by a process of such limitation or abeyance, by the receding of darkness from a partial light, or it may have the aspect of ignorance turning into knowledge; but in fact, it rises by an independent birth from our depths where it has a native existence.

Again, of good and evil it can be said that one exists by true consciousness, the other survives only by wrong consciousness: if there is an unmixed true consciousness, good alone can exist; it is no longer mixed with evil or formed in its presence. Human values of good and evil, as of truth and error, are indeed uncertain and relative: what is held as truth in one place or time is held in another place or time to be error; what is regarded as good is elsewhere or in other times regarded as evil. We find too that what we call evil results in good, what we call good results in evil. But this untoward outcome of good producing evil is due to

the confusion and mixture of knowledge and ignorance, to the penetration of true consciousness by wrong consciousness, so that there is an ignorant or mistaken application of our good, or it is due to the intervention of afflicting forces. In the opposite case of evil producing good, the happier and contradictory result is due to the intervention of some true consciousness and force acting behind and in spite of wrong consciousness and wrong will or it is due to the intervention of redressing forces. This relativity, this mixture is a circumstance of human mentality and the workings of the Cosmic Force in human life; it is not the fundamental truth of good and evil. It might be objected that physical evil, such as pain and most bodily suffering, is independent of knowledge and ignorance, of right and wrong consciousness, inherent in physical Nature: but, fundamentally, all pain and suffering are the result of an insufficient consciousness-force in the surface being which makes it unable to deal rightly with self and Nature or unable to assimilate and to harmonise itself with the contacts of the universal Energy; they would not exist if in us there were an integral presence of the luminous Consciousness and the divine Force of an integral Being. Therefore the relation of truth to falsehood, of good to evil is not a mutual dependence, but is in the nature of a contradiction as of light and shadow; a shadow depends on light for its existence, but light does not depend for its existence on the shadow. The relation between the Absolute and these contraries of some of its fundamental aspects is not that they are opposite fundamental aspects of the Absolute; falsehood and evil have no fundamentality, no power of infinity or eternal being, no self-existence even by latency in the Self-Existent, no authenticity of an original inherence.

It is no doubt a fact that once truth or good manifests, the conception of falsehood and evil becomes a possibility; for whenever there is an affirmation, its negation becomes conceivable. As the manifestation of existence, consciousness and delight made the manifestation of non-existence, inconscience, insensibility conceivable and, because conceivable, therefore in a way inevitable, for all possibilities push towards actuality until they reach it, so is it with these contraries of the aspects

of the Divine Existence. It may be said on this ground that these opposites, since they must be immediately perceivable by the manifesting Consciousness on the very threshold of manifestation, can take rank as implied absolutes and are inseparable from all cosmic existence. But it must first be noted that it is only in cosmic manifestation that they become possible; they cannot pre-exist in the timeless being, for they are incompatible with the unity and bliss that are its substance. In cosmos also they cannot come into being except by a limitation of truth and good into partial and relative forms and by a breaking up of the unity of existence and consciousness into separative consciousness and separative being. For where there is oneness and complete mutuality of consciousness-force even in multiplicity and diversity, there truth of self-knowledge and mutual knowledge is automatic and error of self-ignorance and mutual ignorance is impossible. So too where truth exists as a whole on a basis of self-aware oneness, falsehood cannot enter and evil is shut out by the exclusion of wrong consciousness and wrong will and their dynamisation of falsehood and error. As soon as separateness enters, these things also can enter; but even this simultaneity is not inevitable. If there is sufficient mutuality, even in the absence of an active sense of oneness, and if the separate beings do not transgress or deviate from their norms of limited knowledge, harmony and truth can still be sovereign and evil will have no gate of entry. There is, therefore, no authentic inevitable cosmicity of falsehood and evil even as there is no absoluteness; they are circumstances or results that arise only at a certain stage when separativeness culminates in opposition and ignorance in a primitive unconsciousness of knowledge and a resultant wrong consciousness and wrong knowledge with its content of wrong will, wrong feeling, wrong action and wrong reaction. The question is at what juncture of cosmic manifestation the opposites enter in; for it may be either at some stage of the increasing involution of consciousness in separative mind and life or only after the plunge into inconscience. This resolves itself into the question whether falsehood, error, wrong and evil exist originally in the mental and vital planes and are native to mind and life or are proper only to the material manifestation because inflicted on

mind and life there by the obscurity arising from the Inconscience. It may be questioned too whether, if they do exist in supraphysical mind and life, they were original and inevitable there; for they may rather have entered in as a consequence or a supraphysical extension from the material manifestation. Or, if that is untenable, it may be that they arose as an enabling supraphysical affirmation in the universal Mind and Life, a precedent necessity for their appearance in that manifestation to which they more naturally belong as an inevitable outcome of the creative Inconscience.

It was for a long time held by the human mind as a traditional knowledge that when we go beyond the material plane, these things are found to exist there also in worlds beyond us. There are in these planes of supraphysical experience powers and forms of vital mind and life that seem to be the prephysical foundation of the discordant, defective or perverse forms and powers of life-mind and life-force which we find in the terrestrial existence. There are forces, and subliminal experience seems to show that there are supraphysical beings embodying those forces, that are attached in their root-nature to ignorance, to darkness of consciousness, to misuse of force, to perversity of delight, to all the causes and consequences of the things that we call evil. These powers, beings or forces are active to impose their adverse constructions upon terrestrial creatures; eager to maintain their reign in the manifestation, they oppose the increase of light and truth and good and, still more, are antagonistic to the progress of the soul towards a divine consciousness and divine existence. It is this feature of existence that we see figured in the tradition of the conflict between the Powers of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, cosmic Harmony and cosmic Anarchy, a tradition universal in ancient myth and in religion and common to all systems of occult knowledge.

The theory of this traditional knowledge is perfectly rational and verifiable by inner experience, and it imposes itself if we admit the supraphysical and do not cabin ourselves in the acceptation of material being as the only reality. As there is a cosmic Self and Spirit pervading and upholding the universe and its beings, so too there is a cosmic Force that moves all

things, and on this original cosmic Force depend and act many cosmic Forces that are its powers or arise as forms of its universal action. Whatever is formulated in the universe has a Force or Forces that support it, seek to fulfil or further it, find their foundation in its functioning, their account of success in its success and growth and domination, their self-fulfilment or their prolongation of being in its victory or survival. As there are Powers of Knowledge or Forces of the Light, so there are Powers of Ignorance and tenebrous Forces of the Darkness whose work is to prolong the reign of Ignorance and Inconscience. As there are Forces of Truth, so there are Forces that live by the Falsehood and support it and work for its victory; as there are powers whose life is intimately bound up with the existence, the idea and the impulse of Good, so there are Forces whose life is bound up with the existence and the idea and the impulse of Evil. It is this truth of the cosmic Invisible that was symbolised in the ancient belief of a struggle between the powers of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil for the possession of the world and the government of the life of man; — this was the significance of the contest between the Vedic Gods and their opponents, sons of Darkness and Division, figured in a later tradition as Titan and Giant and Demon, Asura, Rakshasa, Pisacha; the same tradition is found in the Zoroastrian Double Principle and the later Semitic opposition of God and his Angels on the one side and Satan and his hosts on the other, — invisible Personalities and Powers that draw man to the divine Light and Truth and Good or lure him into subjection to the undivine principle of Darkness and Falsehood and Evil. Modern thought is aware of no invisible forces other than those revealed or constructed by Science; it does not believe that Nature is capable of creating any other beings than those around us in the physical world, men, beasts, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, germs and animalculae. But if there are invisible cosmic forces physical in their nature that act upon the body of inanimate objects, there is no valid reason why there should not be invisible cosmic forces mental and vital in their nature that act upon his mind and his life-force. And if Mind and Life, impersonal forces, form conscious beings or use persons to embody them in physical forms and in a physical world and can

act upon Matter and through Matter, it is not impossible that on their own planes they should form conscious beings whose subtler substance is invisible to us or that they should be able to act from those planes on beings in physical Nature. Whatever reality or mythical unreality we may attach to the traditional figures of past human belief or experience, they would then be representations of things that are true in principle. In that case the first source of good and evil would be not in terrestrial life or in the evolution from the Inconscience, but in Life itself, their source would be supraphysical and they would be reflected here from a larger supraphysical Nature.

This is certain that when we go back into ourselves very deep away from the surface appearance, we find that the mind, heart and sensational being of man are moved by forces not under his own control and that he can become an instrument in the hands of Energies of a cosmic character without knowing the origin of his actions. It is by stepping back from the physical surface into his inner being and subliminal consciousness that he becomes directly aware of them and is able to know directly and deal with their action upon him. He grows aware of interventions which seek to lead him in one direction or another, of suggestions and impulsions which had disguised themselves as original movements of his own mind and against which he had to battle. He can realise that he is not a conscious creature inexplicably produced in an unconscious world out of a seed of inconscient Matter and moving about in an obscure self-ignorance, but an embodied soul through whose action cosmic Nature is seeking to fulfil itself, the living ground of a vast debate between a darkness of Ignorance out of which it emerges here and a light of Knowledge which is growing upwards towards an unforeseen termination. The Forces which seek to move him, and among them the Forces of good and evil, present themselves as powers of universal Nature; but they seem to belong not only to the physical universe, but to planes of Life and Mind beyond it.

The first thing that we have to note of importance to the problem preoccupying us is that these Forces in their action seem often to surpass the measures of human relativity; they are in their larger action superhuman, divine, titanic or demoniac, but

they may create their formations in him in large or in little, in his greatness or his smallness, they may seize and drive him at moments or for periods, they may influence his impulses or his acts or possess his whole nature. If that possession happens, he may himself be pushed to an excess of the normal humanity of good or evil; especially the evil takes forms which shock the sense of human measure, exceed the bounds of human personality, approach the gigantic, the inordinate, the immeasurable. It may then be questioned whether it is not a mistake to deny absoluteness to evil; for as there is a drive, an aspiration, a yearning in man towards an absolute truth, good, beauty, so these movements, — as also the transcending intensities attainable by pain and suffering, — seem to indicate the attempt at self-realisation of an absolute evil. But the immeasurable is not a sign of absoluteness: for the absolute is not in itself a thing of magnitude; it is beyond measure, not in the sole sense of vastness, but in the freedom of its essential being; it can manifest itself in the infinitesimal as well as in the infinite. It is true that as we pass from the mental to the spiritual, — and that is a passage towards the absolute, — a subtle wideness and an increasing intensity of light, of power, of peace, of ecstasy mark our passing out of our limitations: but this is at first only a sign of freedom, of height, of universality, not yet of an inward absoluteness of self-existence which is the essence of the matter. To this absoluteness pain and evil cannot attain, they are bound to limitation and they are derivative. If pain becomes immeasurable, it ends itself or ends that in which it manifests, or collapses into insensibility or, in rare circumstances, it may turn into an ecstasy of Ananda. If evil became sole and immeasurable, it would destroy the world or destroy that which bore and supported it; it would bring things and itself back by disintegration into non-existence. No doubt the Powers that support darkness and evil attempt by the magnitude of their self-aggrandisement to reach an appearance of infinity, but immensity is all they can achieve and not infinity; or, at most, they are able to represent their element as a kind of abysmal infinite commensurate with the Inconscient, but it is a false infinite. Self-existence, in essence or by an eternal inherence in the Self-existent, is the condition of absolute-

ness: error, falsehood, evil are cosmic powers, but relative in their nature, not absolute, since they depend for existence on the perversion or contradiction of their opposites and are not like truth and good self-existent absolutes, inherent aspects of the supreme Self-existent.

A second point of questioning emerges from the evidence given for the supraphysical and pre-physical existence of these dark opposites: for that suggests that they may be after all original cosmic principles. But it is to be noted that their appearance does not extend higher than the lower supraphysical life-planes; they are "powers of the Prince of Air", — air being in the ancient symbolism the principle of life and therefore of the mid-worlds where the vital principle is predominant and essential. The adverse opposites are not, then, primal powers of the cosmos, but creations of Life or of Mind in life. Their supraphysical aspects and influences on earth-nature can be explained by the co-existence of worlds of a descending involution with parallel worlds of an ascending evolution, not precisely created by earth-existence, but created as an annexe to the descending world-order and a prepared support for the evolutionary terrestrial formations; here evil may appear, not as inherent in all life, but as a possibility and a pre-formation that makes inevitable its formation in the evolutionary emergence of consciousness out of the Inconscient. However this may be, it is as an outcome of the Inconscience that we can best watch and understand the origin of falsehood, error, wrong and evil, for it is in the return of Inconscience towards Consciousness that they can be seen taking their formation and it is there that they seem to be normal and even inevitable.

The first emergence from the Inconscient is Matter, and in Matter it would seem that falsehood and evil cannot exist, because both are created by a divided and ignorant surface consciousness and its reactions. There is no such active surface organisation of consciousness, no such reactions in material forces or objects: whatever indwelling secret consciousness there may be in them seems to be one, undifferentiated, mute; inertly inherent and intrinsic in the Energy that constitutes the object, it effectualises and maintains the form by the silent

occult Idea in it, but is otherwise self-rapt in the form of energy it has created, uncommunicating and inexpressive. Even if it differentiates itself according to the form of Matter in a corresponding form of self-being, *rūpam rūpam pratirūpo babhūva*[1], there is no psychological organisation, no system of conscious actions or reactions. It is only by contact with conscious beings that material objects exercise powers or influences which can be called good or evil: but that good or evil is determined by the contacted being's sense of help or harm, of benefit or injury from them; these values do not belong to the material object but to some Force that uses it or they are created by the consciousness that contacts it. Fire warms a man or burns him, but that is as involuntarily he meets it or voluntarily uses it; a medicinal herb cures or a poison kills, but the value of good or evil is brought into action by the user: it is to be observed too that a poison can cure as well as kill, a medicine kill or harm as well as cure or benefit. The world of pure Matter is neutral, irresponsible; these values insisted on by the human being do not exist in material Nature: as a superior Nature transcends the duality of good and evil, so this inferior Nature falls below it. The question may begin to assume a different aspect if we go behind physical knowledge and accept the conclusions of an occult inquiry, — for here we are told that there are conscious influences that attach themselves to objects and these can be good or evil; but it might still be held that this does not affect the neutrality of the object which does not act by an individualised consciousness but only as it is utilised for good or for evil or for both together: the duality of good and evil is not native to the material principle, it is absent from the world of Matter.

The duality begins with conscious life and emerges fully with the development of mind in life; the vital mind, the mind of desire and sensation, is the creator of the sense of evil and of the fact of evil. Moreover, in animal life, the fact of evil is there, the evil of suffering and the sense of suffering, the evil of violence and cruelty and strife and deception, but the sense of moral evil is absent; in animal life there is no duality of sin or virtue, all action is neutral and permissible for the preserva-

[1] *Katha Upanishad*, II. 2. 9.

tion of life and its maintenance and for the satisfaction of the life-instincts. The sensational values of good and evil are inherent in the form of pain and pleasure, vital satisfaction and vital frustration, but the mental idea, the moral response of the mind to these values are a creation of the human being. It does not follow, as might be hastily inferred, that they are unrealities, mental constructions only, and that the only true way to receive the activities of Nature is either a neutral indifference or an equal acceptance or, intellectually, an admission of all that she may do as a divine or a natural law in which everything is impartially admissible. That is indeed one side of the truth: there is an infrarational truth of Life and Matter which is impartial and neutral and admits all things as facts of Nature and serviceable for the creation, preservation or destruction of life, three necessary movements of the universal Energy which are all connectedly indispensable and, each in its own place, of equal value. There is too a truth of the detached reason which can look on all that is thus admitted by Nature as serviceable to her processes in life and matter and observe everything that is with an unmoved neutral impartiality and acceptance; this is a philosophic and scientific reason that witnesses and seeks to understand but considers it futile to judge the activities of the cosmic Energy. There is too a suprarational truth formulating itself in spiritual experience which can observe the play of universal possibility, accept all impartially as the true and natural features and consequences of a world of ignorance and inconscience or admit all with calm and compassion as a part of the divine working, but, while it awaits the awakening of a higher consciousness and knowledge as the sole escape from what presents itself as evil, is ready with help and intervention where that is truly helpful and possible. But, nonetheless, there is also this other middle truth of consciousness which awakens us to the values of good and evil and the appreciation of their necessity and importance; this awakening, whatever may be the sanction or the validity of its particular judgments, is one of the indispensable steps in the process of evolutionary Nature.

But from what then does this awakening proceed? what is it in the human being that originates and gives its power and

place to the sense of good and evil? If we regard only the process, we may agree that it is the vital mind that makes the distinction. Its first valuation is sensational and individual, — all that is pleasant, helpful, beneficial to the life-ego is good, all that is unpleasant, malefic, injurious or destructive is evil. Its next valuation is utilitarian and social: all that is considered helpful to the associated life, all that it demands from the individual in order to remain in association and to regulate association for the best maintenance, satisfaction, development, good order of the associated life and its units, is good; all that has in the view of the society a contrary effect or tendency is evil. But thinking mind then comes in with its own valuation and strives to find out an intellectual basis, an idea of law or principle, rational or cosmic, a law of Karma perhaps or an ethical system founded on reason or on an aesthetic, emotional or hedonistic basis. Religion brings in her sanctions; there is a word or law of God that enjoins righteousness even though Nature permits or stimulates its opposite, — or perhaps Truth and Righteousness are themselves God and there is no other Divinity. But, behind all this practical or rational enforcement of the human ethical instinct, there is a feeling that there is something deeper: all these standards are either too narrow and rigid or complex and confused, uncertain, subject to alteration by a mental or a vital change or evolution; yet it is felt that there is a deeper abiding truth and something within us that can have the intuition of that truth, — in other words, that the real sanction is inward, spiritual and psychic. The traditional account of this inner witness is conscience, a power of perception in us half mental, half intuitive; but this is something superficial, constructed, unreliable: there is certainly within us, though less easily active, more masked by surface elements, a deeper spiritual sense, the soul's discernment, an inborn light within our nature.

What then is this spiritual or psychic witness or what is to it the value of the sense of good and evil? It may be maintained that the one use of the sense of sin and evil is that the embodied being may become aware of the nature of this world of inconscience and ignorance, awake to a knowledge of its evil and

suffering and the relative nature of its good and happiness and turn away from it to that which is absolute. Or else its spiritual use may be to purify the nature by the pursuit of good and the negation of evil until it is ready to perceive the supreme good and turn from the world towards God, or, as in the Buddhistic ethical insistence, it may serve to prepare the dissolution of the ignorant ego-complex and the escape from personality and suffering. But also it may be that this awakening is a spiritual necessity of the evolution itself, a step towards the growth of the being out of the Ignorance into the truth of the divine unity and the evolution of a divine consciousness and a divine being. For much more than the mind or life which can turn either to good or to evil, it is the soul-personality, the psychic being, which insists on the distinction, though in a larger sense than the mere moral difference. It is the soul in us which turns always towards Truth, Good and Beauty, because it is by these things that it itself grows in stature; the rest, their opposites, are a necessary part of experience, but have to be outgrown in the spiritual increase of the being. The fundamental psychic entity in us has the delight of life and all experience as part of the progressive manifestation of the spirit, but the very principle of its delight of life is to gather out of all contacts and happenings their secret divine sense and essence, a divine use and purpose so that by experience our mind and life may grow out of the Inconscience towards a supreme consciousness, out of the divisions of the Ignorance towards an integralising consciousness and knowledge. It is there for that and it pursues from life to life its ever-increasing upward tendency and insistence; the growth of the soul is a growth out of darkness into light, out of falsehood into truth, out of suffering into its own supreme and universal Ananda. The soul's perception of good and evil may not coincide with the mind's artificial standards, but it has a deeper sense, a sure discrimination of what points to the higher Light and what points away from it. It is true that as the inferior light is below good and evil, so the superior spiritual light is beyond good and evil; but this is not in the sense of admitting all things with an impartial neutrality or of obeying equally the impulses of good and evil, but in the sense that a

higher law of being intervenes in which there is no longer any place or utility for these values. There is a self-law of supreme Truth which is above all standards; there is a supreme and universal Good inherent, intrinsic, self-existent, self-aware, self-moved and determined, infinitely plastic with the pure plasticity of the luminous consciousness of the supreme Infinite.

If, then, evil and falsehood are natural products of the Inconscience, automatic results of the evolution of life and mind from it in the processus of the Ignorance, we have to see how they arise, on what they depend for their existence and what is the remedy or escape. In the surface emergence of mental and vital consciousness from the Inconscience is to be found the process by which these phenomena come into being. Here there are two determining factors, — and it is these that are the efficient cause of the simultaneous emergence of falsehood and evil. First, there is an underlying, a still occult consciousness and power of inherent knowledge, and there is also an overlying layer of what might be called indeterminate or else ill-formed stuff of vital and physical consciousness; through this obscure difficult medium the emerging mentality has to force its way and has to impose itself on it by a constructed and no longer an inherent knowledge, because this stuff is still full of nescience, heavily burdened and enveloped with the inconscience of Matter. Next, the emergence takes place in a separated form of life which has to affirm itself against a principle of inanimate material inertia and a constant pull of that material inertia towards disintegration and a relapse into the original inanimate Inconscience. This separated life-form has also to affirm itself, supported only by a limited principle of association, against an outside world which is, if not hostile to its existence, yet full of dangers and on which it has to impose itself, conquer life-room, arrive at expression and propagation, if it wishes to survive. The result of an emergence of consciousness in these conditions is the growth of a self-affirming vital and physical individual, a construction of Nature of life and matter with a concealed psychic or spiritual true individual behind it for which Nature is creating this outward means of expression. As mentality increases, this vital and material individual takes

the more developed form of a constantly self-affirming mental, vital and physical ego. Our surface consciousness and type of existence, our natural being, has developed its present character under the compulsion of these two initial and basic facts of the evolutionary emergence.

In its first appearance consciousness has the semblance of a miracle, a power alien to Matter that manifests unaccountably in a world of inconscient Nature and grows slowly and with difficulty. Knowledge is acquired, created out of nothing as it were, learned, increased, accumulated by an ephemeral ignorant creature in whom at birth it is entirely absent or present only, not as knowledge, but in the form of an inherited capacity proper to the stage of development of this slowly learning ignorance. It might be conjectured that consciousness is only the original Inconscience mechanically recording the facts of existence on the brain-cells with a reflex or response in the cells automatically reading the record and dictating their answer; the record, reflex, response together constitute what appears to be consciousness. But this is evidently not the whole truth, for it might account for observation and mechanical action, — although it is not clear how an unconscious record and response can turn into a conscious observation, a conscious sense of things and sense of self, — but does not credibly account for ideation, imagination, speculation, the free play of intellect with its observed material. The evolution of consciousness and knowledge cannot be accounted for unless there is already a concealed consciousness in things with its inherent and native powers emerging little by little. Further, the facts of animal life and the operations of the emergent mind in life impose on us the conclusion that there is in this concealed consciousness an underlying Knowledge or power of knowledge which by the necessity of the life-contacts with the environment comes to the surface.

The individual animal being in its first conscious self-affirmation has to rely on two sources of knowledge. As it is nescient and helpless, a small modicum of uninformed surface consciousness in a world unknown to it, the secret Conscious-Force sends up to this surface the minimum of intuition necessary

for it to maintain its existence and go through the operations indispensable to life and survival. This intuition is not possessed by the animal, but possesses and moves it; it is something that manifests of itself in the grain of the vital and physical substance of consciousness under pressure of a need and for the needed occasion: but at the same time a surface result of this intuition accumulates and takes the form of an automatic instinct which works whenever the occasion for it recurs; this instinct belongs to the race and is imparted at birth to its individual members. The intuition, when it occurs or recurs, is unerring; the instinct is automatically correct as a rule, but can err, for it fails or blunders when the surface consciousness or an ill-developed intelligence interferes or if the instinct continues to act mechanically when, owing to changed circumstances, the need or the necessary circumstances are no longer there. The second source of knowledge is surface contact with the world outside the natural individual being; it is this contact which is the cause first of a conscious sensation and sense-perception and then of intelligence. If there were not an underlying consciousness, the contact would not create any perception or reaction; it is because the contact stimulates into a feeling and a surface response the subliminal of a being already vitalised by the subconscious life-principle and its first needs and seekings that a surface awareness begins to form and develop. Intrinsically the emergence of a surface consciousness by force of life contacts is due to the fact that in both subject and object of the contact consciousness-force is already existent in a subliminal latency: when the life-principle is ready, sufficiently sensitive in the subject, the recipient of the contact, this subliminal consciousness emerges in a response to the stimulus which begins to constitute a vital or life mind, the mind of the animal, and then, in the course of the evolution, a thinking intelligence. The secret consciousness is rendered into surface sensation and perception, the secret force into surface impulse.

If this underlying subliminal consciousness were to come itself to the surface, there would be a direct meeting between the consciousness of the subject and the contents of the object and the result would be a direct knowledge; but this is not possible,

first, because of the veto or obstruction of the Inconscience and, secondly, because the evolutionary intention is to develop slowly through an imperfect but growing surface awareness. The secret consciousness-force has therefore to limit itself to imperfect renderings in a surface vital and mental vibration and operation and is forced by the absence, holding back or insufficiency of the direct awareness to develop organs and instincts for an indirect knowledge. This creation of an external knowledge and intelligence takes place in an already prepared indeterminate conscious structure which is the earliest formation on the surface. At first this structure is only a minimum formation of consciousness with a vague sensational perception and a response-impulse; but, as more organised forms of life appear, this grows into a life-mind and vital intelligence largely mechanical and automatic in the beginning and concerned only with practical needs, desires and impulses. All this activity is in its initiation intuitive and instinctive; the underlying consciousness is translated in the surface substratum into automatic movements of the conscious stuff of life and body: the mind-movements, when they appear, are involved in these automatisms, they occur as a subordinate mental notation within the predominant vital sense-notation. But slowly mind starts its task of disengaging itself; it still works for the life-instinct, life-need and life-desire, but its own special characters emerge, observation, invention, device, intention, execution of purpose, while sensation and impulse add to themselves emotion and bring a subtler and finer affective urge and value into the crude vital reaction. Mind is still much involved in life and its highest purely mental operations are not in evidence; it accepts a large background of instinct and vital intuition as its support, and the intelligence developed, though always growing as the animal life-scale rises, is an added superstructure.

When human intelligence adds itself to the animal basis, this basis still remains present and active, but it is largely changed, subtilised and uplifted by conscious will and intention; the automatic life of instinct and vital intuition diminishes and cannot keep its original predominant proportion to the self-aware mental intelligence. Intuition becomes less purely intuitive: even when there is still a strong vital intuition, its vital character is concealed

by mentalisation, and mental intuition is most often a mixture, not the pure article, for an alloy is added to make it mentally current and serviceable. In the animal also the surface consciousness can obstruct or alter the intuition but, because its capacity is less, it interferes less with the automatic, mechanical or instinctive action of Nature: in mental man when the intuition rises towards the surface, it is caught at once before it reaches and is translated into terms of mind-intelligence with a gloss or mental interpretation added which conceals the origin of the knowledge. Instinct also is deprived of its intuitive character by being taken up and mentalised and by that change becomes less sure, though more assisted, when not replaced, by the plastic power of adaptation of things and self-adaptation proper to the intelligence. The emergence of mind in life brings an immense increase of the range and capacity of the evolving consciousness-force; but it also brings an immense increase in the range and capacity of error. For evolving mind trails constantly error as its shadow, a shadow that grows with the growing body of consciousness and knowledge.

If in the evolution the surface consciousness were always open to the action of intuition, the intervention of error would not be possible. For intuition is an edge of light thrust out by the secret Supermind, and an emergent Truth-Consciousness, however limited, yet sure in its action, would be the consequence. Instinct, if it had to form, would be plastic to the intuition and adapt itself freely to evolutionary change and the change of inner or environing circumstance. Intelligence, if it had to form, would be subservient to intuition and would be its accurate mental expression; its brilliancy would perhaps be modulated to suit a diminished action serving as a minor, not, as it is now, a major function and movement, but it would not be erratic by deviation, would not by its parts of obscurity sink into the false or fallible. But this could not be, because the hold of Inconscience on the matter, the surface substance, in which mind and life have to express themselves, makes the surface consciousness obscure and unresponsive to the light within; it is impelled moreover to cherish this defect, to substitute more and more its own incomplete but better grasped clarities for the unaccountable inner

intimations, because a rapid development of the Truth-Consciousness is not the intention in Nature. For the method chosen by her is a slow and difficult evolution of Inconscience developing into Ignorance and Ignorance forming itself into a mixed, modified and partial knowledge before it can be ready for transformation into a higher Truth-Consciousness and Truth-Knowledge. Our imperfect mental intelligence is a necessary stage of transition before this higher transformation can be made possible.

There are, in practical fact, two poles of the conscious being between which the evolutionary process works, one a surface nescience which has to change gradually into knowledge, the other a secret Consciousness-Force in which all power of knowledge is and which has slowly to manifest in the nescience. The surface nescience full of incomprehension and inapprehension can change into knowledge because consciousness is there involved in it; if it were intrinsically an entire absence of consciousness, the change would be impossible: but still it works as an inconscience trying to be conscious; it is at first a nescience compelled by need and outer impact to feeling and response and then an ignorance labouring to know. The means used is a contact with the world and its forces and objects which, like the rubbing of tinders, creates a spark of awareness; the response from within is that spark leaping out into manifestation. But the surface nescience in receiving the response from an underlying source of knowledge subdues and changes it into something obscure and incomplete; there is an imperfect seizure or a misprision of the intuition that answers to the contact: still by this process an initiation of responsive consciousness, a first accumulation of ingrained or habitual instinctive knowledge begins, and there follows upon it first a primitive and then a developed capacity of receptive awareness, understanding, reply of action, previsional initiation of action, — an evolving consciousness which is half-knowledge, half-ignorance. All that is unknown is met on the basis of what is known; but as this knowledge is imperfect, as it receives imperfectly and responds imperfectly to the contacts of things, there can be a misprision of the new contact as well as a misprision or deformation of the intuitive response, a double source of error.

It is evident, in these conditions, that Error is a necessary accompaniment, almost a necessary condition and instrumentation, an indispensable step or stage in the slow evolution towards knowledge in a consciousness that begins from nescience and works in the stuff of a general nescience. The evolving consciousness has to acquire knowledge by an indirect means which does not give even a fragmentary certitude; for there is at first only a figure or a sign, an image or a vibration physical in character created by contact with the object and a resulting vital sensation which have to be interpreted by mind and sense and turned into a corresponding mental idea or figure. Things thus experienced and mentally known have to be related together; things unknown have to be observed, discovered, fitted into the already acquired sum of experience and knowledge. At each step different possibilities of fact, significance, judgment, interpretation, relation present themselves; some have to be tested and rejected, others accepted and confirmed: to shut out error is impossible without limiting the chances of acquisition of knowledge. Observation is the first instrument of the mind, but observation itself is a complex process open at every step to the mistakes of the ignorant observing consciousness; misprision of the fact by the senses and the sense-mind, omission, wrong selection and putting together, unconscious additions made by a personal impression or personal reaction create a false or an imperfect composite picture; to these errors are added the errors of inference, judgment, interpretation of facts by the intelligence: when even the data are not sure or perfect, the conclusions built on them must also be insecure and imperfect.

Consciousness in its acquisition of knowledge proceeds from the known to the unknown; it builds a structure of acquired experience, memories, impressions, judgments, a composite mental plan of things which is of the nature of a shifting and ever modifiable fixity. In the reception of new knowledge, what comes in to be received is judged in the light of past knowledge and fitted into the structure; if it cannot properly fit, it is either dovetailed in anyhow or rejected: but the existing knowledge and its structures or standards may not be applicable to the new object or new field of knowledge, the fitting may be a misfitting

or the rejection may be an erroneous response. To misprision and wrong interpretation of facts, there is added misapplication of knowledge, miscombination, misconstruction, misrepresentation, a complicated machinery of mental error. In all this enlightened obscurity of our mental parts a secret intuition is at work, a truth-urge that corrects or pushes the intelligence to correct what is erroneous, to labour towards a true picture of things and a true interpretative knowledge. But intuition itself is limited in the human mind by mental misprision of its intimations and is unable to act in its own right; for whether it be physical, vital or mental intuition, it has to present itself in order to be received, not nude and pure, but garbed with a mental coating or entirely enveloped in an ample mental vesture; so disguised, its true nature cannot be recognised and its relation to mind and its office are not understood, its way of working is ignored by the hasty and half-aware human intelligence. There are intuitions of actuality, of possibility, of the determining truth behind things, but all are mistaken by the mind for each other. A great confusion of half-grasped material and an experimental building with it, a representation or mental structure of the figure of self and things rigid and yet chaotic, half formed and arranged, half jumbled, half true, half erroneous, but always imperfect, is the character of human knowledge.

Error by itself, however, would not amount to falsehood; it would only be an imperfection of truth, a trying, an essay of possibilities: for when we do not know, untried and uncertain possibilities have to be admitted and, even if as a result an imperfect or inapt structure of thought is built, yet it may justify itself by opening to fresh knowledge in unexpected directions and either its dissolution and rebuilding or the discovery of some truth it concealed might increase our cognition or our experience. In spite of the mixture created the growth of consciousness, intelligence and reason could arrive through this mixed truth to a clearer and truer figure of self-knowledge and world-knowledge. The obstruction of the original and enveloping inconscience would diminish, and an increasing mental consciousness would reach a clarity and wholeness which would enable the concealed powers of direct knowledge and intuitive process to emerge,

utilise the prepared and enlightened instruments and make mind-intelligence their true agent and truth-builder on the evolutionary surface.

But here the second condition or factor of the evolution intervenes; for this seeking for knowledge is not an impersonal mental process hampered only by the general limitations of mind-intelligence: the ego is there, the physical ego, the life-ego bent, not on self-knowledge and the discovery of the truth of things and the truth of life, but on vital self-affirmation; a mental ego is there also bent on its own personal self-affirmation and largely directed and used by the vital urge for its life-desire and life-purpose. For as mind develops, there develops also a mental individuality with a personal drive of mind-tendency, a mental temperament, a mind-formation of its own. This surface mental individuality is egocentric; it looks at the world and things and happenings from its own standpoint and sees them not as they are but as they affect itself: in observing things it gives them the turn suitable to its own tendency and temperament, selects or rejects, arranges truth according to its own mental preference and convenience; observation, judgment, reason are all determined or affected by this mind-personality and assimilated to the needs of the individuality and the ego. Even when the mind aims most at a pure impersonality of truth and reason, a sheer impersonality is impossible to it; even the most trained, severe and vigilant intellect fails to observe the twists and turns it gives to truth in the reception of fact and idea and the construction of its mental knowledge. Here we have an almost inexhaustible source of distortion of truth, a cause of falsification, an unconscious or half-conscious will to error, an acceptance of ideas or facts not by a clear perception of the true and the false, but by preference, personal suitability, temperamental choice, prejudgment. Here is a fruitful seed-plot for the growth of falsehood or a gate or many gates through which it can enter by stealth or by an usurping but acceptable violence. Truth too can enter in and take up its dwelling, not by its own right, but at the mind's pleasure.

In the terms of the Sankhya psychology we can distinguish three types of mental individuality, — that which is governed by

the principle of obscurity and inertia, first-born of the Inconscience, tamasic; that which is governed by a force of passion and activity, kinetic, rajasic; that which is cast in the mould of the sattwic principle of light, harmony, balance. The tamasic *intelligence has its seat in the physical mind: it is inert to ideas,* — except to those which it receives inertly, blindly, passively from a recognised source or authority, — obscure in their reception, unwilling to enlarge itself, recalcitrant to new stimulus, conservative and immobile; it clings to its received structure of knowledge and its one power is repetitive practicality, but it is a power limited by the accustomed, the obvious, the established and familiar and already secure; it thrusts away all that is new and likely to disturb it. The rajasic intelligence has its main seat in the vital mind and is of two kinds: one kind is defensive with violence and passion, assertive of its mental individuality and all that is in agreement with it, preferred by its volition, adapted to its outlook, but aggressive against all that is contrary to its mental ego-structure or unacceptable to its personal intellectuality; the other kind is enthusiastic for new things, passionate, insistent, impetuous, often mobile beyond measure, inconstant and ever restless, governed in its idea not by truth and light but by the zest of intellectual battle and movement and adventure. The sattwic intelligence is eager for knowledge, as open as it can be to it, careful to consider and verify and balance, to adjust and adapt to its view whatever confirms itself as truth, receiving all that it can assimilate, skilful to build truth in a harmonious intellectual structure: but, because its light is limited, as all mental light must be, it is unable to enlarge itself so as to receive equally all truth and all knowledge; it has a mental ego, even an enlightened one, and is determined by it in its observation, judgment, reasoning, mental choice and preference. In most men there is a predominance of one of these qualities but also a mixture; the same mind can be open and plastic and harmonic in one direction, kinetic and vital, hasty and prejudiced and ill-balanced in another, in yet another obscure and unreceptive. This limitation by personality, this defence of personality and refusal to receive what is unassimilable, is necessary for the individual being because in its evolution, at the stage reached,

it has a certain self-expression, a certain type of experience and use of experience which must, for the mind and life at least, govern nature; that for the moment is its law of being, its dharma. This limitation of mind-consciousness by personality and of truth by mental temperament and preference must be the rule of our nature so long as the individual has not reached universality, is not yet preparing for mind-transcendence. But it is evident that this condition is inevitably a source of error and can at any moment be the cause of a falsification of knowledge, an unconscious or half-wilful self-deception, a refusal to admit true knowledge, a readiness to assert acceptable wrong knowledge as true knowledge.

This is in the field of cognition, but the same law applies to will and action. Out of ignorance a wrong consciousness is created which gives a wrong dynamic reaction to the contact of persons, things, happenings: the surface consciousness develops the habit of ignoring, misunderstanding or rejecting the suggestions to action or against action that come from the secret inmost consciousness, the psychic entity; it answers instead to unenlightened mental and vital suggestions, or acts in accordance with the demands and impulsions of the vital ego. Here the second of the primary conditions of the evolution, the law of a separate life-being affirming itself in a world which is not-self to it, comes into prominence and assumes an immense importance. It is here that the surface vital personality or life-self asserts its dominance, and this dominance of the ignorant vital being is a principal active source of discord and disharmony, a cause of inner and outer perturbations of the life, a mainspring of wrong-doing and evil. The natural vital element in us, in so far as it is unchecked or untrained or retains its primitive character, is not concerned with truth or right consciousness or right action; it is concerned with self-affirmation, with life-growth, with possession, with satisfaction of impulse, with all satisfactions of desire. This main need and demand of the life-self seems all-important to it; it would readily carry it out without any regard to truth or right or good or any other consideration: but because mind is there and has these conceptions, because the soul is there and has these soul-perceptions, it tries to dominate mind and get from it

by dictation a sanction and order of execution for its own will of self-affirmation, a verdict of truth and right and good for its own vital assertions, impulses, desires; it is concerned with self-justification in order that it may have room for full self-affirmation. *But if it can get the assent of mind, it is quite ready to ignore* all these standards and set up only one standard, the satisfaction, growth, strength, greatness of the vital ego. The life-individual needs place, expansion, possession of its world, dominance and control of things and beings; it needs life-room, a space in the sun, self-assertion, survival. It needs these things for itself and for those with whom it associates itself, for its own ego and for the collective ego; it needs them for its ideas, creeds, ideals, interests, imaginations: for it has to assert these forms of I-ness and my-ness and impose them on the world around it or, if it is not strong enough to do that, it has at least to defend and maintain them against others to the best of its power and contrivance. It may try to do it by methods it thinks or chooses to think or represent as right; it may try to do it by the naked use of violence, ruse, falsehood, destructive aggression, crushing of other life-formations: the principle is the same whatever the means or the moral attitude. It is not only in the realm of interests, but in the realm of ideas and the realm of religion that the vital being of man has introduced this spirit and attitude of self-affirmation and struggle and the use of violence, oppression and suppression, intolerance, aggression; it has imposed the principle of life-egoism on the domain of intellectual truth and the domain of the spirit. Into its self-affirmation the self-asserting life brings in hatred and dislike towards all that stands in the way of its expansion or hurts its ego; it develops as a means or as a passion or reaction of the life-nature cruelty, treachery and all kinds of evil: its satisfaction of desire and impulse takes no account of right and wrong, but only of the fulfilment of desire and impulse. For this satisfaction it is ready to face the risk of destruction and actuality of suffering; for what it is pushed by Nature to aim at is not self-preservation alone, but life-affirmation and life-satisfaction, formulation of life-force and life-being.

It does not follow that this is all that the vital personality is

in its native composition or that evil is its very nature. It is not primarily concerned with truth and good, but it can have the passion for truth and good as it has, more spontaneously, the passion for joy and beauty. In all that is developed by the life-force there is developed at the same time a secret delight somewhere in the being, a delight in good and a delight in evil, a delight in truth and a delight in falsehood, a delight in life and an attraction to death, a delight in pleasure and a delight in pain, in one's own suffering and the suffering of others, but also in one's own joy and happiness and good and the joy and happiness and good of others. For the force of life-affirmation affirms alike the good and the evil: it has its impulses of help and association, of generosity, affection, loyalty, self-giving; it takes up altruism as it takes up egoism, sacrifices itself as well as destroys others; and in all its acts there is the same passion for life-affirmation, the same force of action and fulfilment. This character of vital being and its trend of existence in which what we term good and evil are items but not the mainspring, is evident in subhuman life; in the human being, since there a mental, moral and psychic discernment has developed, it is subjected to control or to camouflage, but it does not change its character. The vital being and its life-force and their drive towards self-affirmation are, in the absence of an overt action of soul-power and spiritual power, Atmashakti, Nature's chief means of effectuation, and without its support neither mind nor body can utilise their possibilities or realise their aim here in existence. It is only if the inner or true vital being replaces the outer life-personality that the drive of the vital ego can be wholly overcome and the life-force become the servant of the soul and a powerful instrumentation for the action of our true spiritual being.

This then is the origin and nature of error, falsehood, wrong and evil in the consciousness and will of the individual; a limited consciousness growing out of nescience is the source of error, a personal attachment to the limitation and the error born of it the source of falsity, a wrong consciousness governed by the life-ego the source of evil. But it is evident that their relative existence is only a phenomenon thrown up by the cosmic Force in its drive towards evolutionary self-expression, and it is there that we have

to look for the significance of the phenomenon. For the emergence of the life-ego is, as we have seen, a machinery of cosmic Nature for the affirmation of the individual, for his self-disengagement from the indeterminate mass substance of the subconscient, for the appearance of a conscious being on a ground prepared by the Inconscience; the principle of life-affirmation of the ego is the necessary consequence. The individual ego is a pragmatic and effective fiction, a translation of the secret self into the terms of surface consciousness, or a subjective substitute for the true self in our surface experience: it is separated by ignorance from other-self and from the inner Divinity, but it is still pushed secretly towards an evolutionary unification in diversity; it has behind itself, though finite, the impulse to the infinite. But this in the terms of an ignorant consciousness translates itself into the will to expand, to be a boundless finite, to take everything it can into itself, to enter into everything and possess it, even to be possessed if by that it can feel itself satisfied and growing in or through others or can take into itself by subjection the being and power of others or get thereby a help or an impulse for its life-affirmation, its life-delight, its enrichment of its mental, vital or physical existence.

But because it does these things as a separate ego for its separate advantage and not by conscious interchange and mutuality, not by unity, life-discord, conflict, disharmony arise, and it is the products of this life-discord and disharmony that we call wrong and evil. Nature accepts them because they are necessary circumstances of the evolution, necessary for the growth of the divided being; they are products of ignorance, supported by an ignorant consciousness that founds itself on division, by an ignorant will that works through division, by an ignorant delight of existence that takes the joy of division. The evolutionary intention acts through the evil as through the good; it has to utilise all because confinement to a limited good would imprison and check the intended evolution; it uses any available material and does what it can with it: this is the reason why we see evil coming out of what we call good and good coming out of what we call evil; and, if we see even what was thought to be evil coming to be accepted as good, what was thought to be good accepted as evil,

it is because our standards of both are evolutionary, limited and mutable. Evolutionary Nature, the terrestrial cosmic Force, seems then at first to have no preference for either of these opposites, it uses both alike for its purpose. And yet it is the same Nature, the same Force that has burdened man with the sense of good and evil and insists on its importance: evidently, therefore, this sense also has an evolutionary purpose; it too must be necessary, it must be there so that man may leave certain things behind him, move towards others, until out of good and evil he can emerge into some Good that is eternal and infinite.

But how is this evolutionary intention in Nature to fulfil itself, by what power, means, impulsion, what principle and process of selection and harmonisation? The method adopted by the mind of man through the ages has been always a principle of selection and rejection, and this has taken the forms of a religious sanction, a social or moral rule of life or an ethical ideal. But this is an empirical means which does not touch the root of the problem because it has no vision of the cause and origin of the malady it attempts to cure; it deals with the symptoms, but deals with them perfunctorily, not knowing what function they serve in the purpose of Nature and what it is in the mind and life that supports them and keeps them in being. Moreover, human good and evil are relative and the standards erected by ethics are uncertain as well as relative: what is forbidden by one religion or another, what is regarded as good or bad by social opinion, what is thought useful to society or noxious to it, what some temporary law of man allows or disallows, what is or is considered helpful or harmful to self or others, what accords with this or that ideal, what is prompted or discouraged by an instinct which we call conscience, — an amalgam of all these viewpoints is the determining heterogeneous idea, constitutes the complex substance of morality; in all of them there is the constant mixture of truth and half-truth and error which pursues all the activities of our limiting mental Knowledge-Ignorance. A mental control over our vital and physical desires and instincts, over our personal and social action, over our dealings with others is indispensable to us as human beings, and morality creates a standard by which we can guide ourselves and establish a

customary control; but the control is always imperfect and it is an expedient, not a solution: man remains always what he is and has ever been, a mixture of good and evil, sin and virtue, a mental ego with an imperfect command over his mental, vital and physical nature.

The endeavour to select, to retain from our consciousness and action all that seems to us good and reject all that seems to us evil and so to re-form our being, to reconstitute and shape ourselves into the image of an ideal, is a more profound ethical motive, because it comes nearer to the true issue; it rests on the sound idea that our life is a becoming and that there is something which we have to become and be. But the ideals constructed by the human mind are selective and relative; to shape our nature rigidly according to them is to limit ourselves and make a construction where there should be growth into larger being. The true call upon us is the call of the Infinite and the Supreme; the self-affirmation and self-abnegation imposed on us by Nature are both movements towards that, and it is the right way of self-affirmation and self-negation taken together in place of the wrong, because ignorant, way of the ego and in place of the conflict between the yes and the no of Nature that we have to discover. If we do not discover that, either the push of life will be too strong for our narrow ideal of perfection, its instrumentation will break and it will fail to consummate and perpetuate itself, or at best a half result will be all that we shall obtain, or else the push away from life will present itself as the only remedy, the one way out of the otherwise invincible grasp of the Ignorance. This indeed is the way out usually indicated by religion; a divinely enjoined morality, a pursuit of piety, righteousness and virtue as laid down in a religious code of conduct, a law of God determined by some human inspiration, is put forward as a part of the means, the direction, by which we can tread the way that leads to the exit, the issue. But this exit leaves the problem where it was; it is only a way of escape for the personal being out of the unsolved perplexity of the cosmic existence. In ancient Indian spiritual thought there was a clearer perception of the difficulty; the practice of truth, virtue, right will and right doing was regarded as a necessity of the

approach to spiritual realisation, but in the realisation itself the being arises to the greater consciousness of the Infinite and Eternal and shakes away from itself the burden of sin and virtue, for that belongs to the relativity and the Ignorance. Behind this larger truer perception lay the intuition that a relative good is a training imposed by World-Nature upon us so that we may pass through it towards the true Good which is absolute. These problems are of the mind and the ignorant life, they do not accompany us beyond mind; as there is a cessation of the duality of truth and error in an infinite Truth-Consciousness, so there is a liberation from the duality of good and evil in an infinite Good, there is transcendence.

There can be no artificial escape from this problem which has always troubled humanity and from which it has found no satisfying issue. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil with its sweet and bitter fruits is secretly rooted in the very nature of the Inconscience from which our being has emerged and on which it still stands as a nether soil and basis of our physical existence; it has grown visibly on the surface in the manifold branchings of the Ignorance which is still the main bulk and condition of our consciousness in its difficult evolution towards a supreme consciousness and an integral awareness. As long as there is this soil with the unfound roots in it and this nourishing air and climate of Ignorance, the tree will grow and flourish and put forth its dual blossoms and its fruit of mixed nature. It would follow that there can be no final solution until we have turned our inconscience into the greater consciousness, made the truth of self and spirit our life-basis and transformed our ignorance into a higher knowledge. All other expedients will only be makeshifts or blind issues; a complete and radical transformation of our nature is the only true solution. It is because the Inconscience imposes its original obscurity on our awareness of self and things and because the Ignorance bases it on an imperfect and divided consciousness and because we live in that obscurity and division that wrong knowledge and wrong will are possible: without wrong knowledge there could be no error or falsehood, without error or falsehood in our dynamic parts there could be no wrong will in our members; without wrong will there could be no wrong-

doing or evil: while these causes endure, the effects also will persist in our action and in our nature. A mental control can only be a control, not a cure; a mental teaching, rule, standard can only impose an artificial groove in which our action revolves mechanically or with difficulty and which imposes a curbed and limited formation on the course of our nature. A total change of consciousness, a radical change of nature is the one remedy and the sole issue.

But since the root of the difficulty is a split, limited and separative existence, this change must consist in an integration, a healing of the divided consciousness of our being, and since that division is complex and many-sided, no partial change on one side of the being can be passed off as a sufficient substitute for the integral transformation. Our first division is that created by our ego and mainly, most forcefully, most vividly by our life-ego, which divides us from all other beings as not-self and ties us to our ego-centricity and the law of an egoistic self-affirmation. It is in the errors of this self-affirmation that wrong and evil first arise: wrong consciousness engenders wrong will in the members, in the thinking mind, in the heart, in the life-mind and the sensational being, in the very body-consciousness; wrong will engenders wrong action of all these instruments, a multiple error and many-branching crookedness of thought and will and sense and feeling. Nor can we deal rightly with others so long as they are to us others, beings who are strangers to ourselves and of whose inner consciousness, soul-need, mind-need, heart-need, life-need, body-need we know little or nothing. The modicum of imperfect sympathy, knowledge and good-will that the law, need and habit of association engender, is a poor quantum of what is required for a true action. A larger mind, a larger heart, a more ample and generous life-force can do something to help us or help others and avoid the worst offences, but this too is insufficient and will not prevent a mass of troubles and harms and collisions of our preferred good with the good of others. By the very nature of our ego and ignorance we affirm ourselves egoistically even when we most pride ourselves on selflessness and ignorantly even when we most pride ourselves on understanding and knowledge. Altruism taken as a rule of life does not deliver us; it is a

potent instrument for self-enlargement and for correction of the narrower ego, but it does not abolish it nor transform it into the true self one with all; the ego of the altruist is as powerful and absorbing as the ego of the selfish and it is often more powerful and insistent because it is a self-righteous and magnified ego. It helps still less if we do wrong to our soul, to our mind, life or body with the idea of subordinating our self to the self of others. To affirm our being rightly so that it may become one with all is the true principle, not to mutilate or immolate it. Self-immolation may be necessary at times, exceptionally, for a cause, in answer to some demand of the heart or for some right or high purpose but cannot be made the rule or nature of life; so exaggerated, it would only feed and exaggerate the ego of others or magnify some collective ego, not lead us or mankind to the discovery and affirmation of our or its true being. Sacrifice and self-giving are indeed a true principle and a spiritual necessity, for we cannot affirm our being rightly without sacrifice or without self-giving to something larger than our ego; but that too must be done with a right consciousness and will founded on a true knowledge. To develop the sattwic part of our nature, a nature of light, understanding, balance, harmony, sympathy, good-will, kindness, fellow-feeling, self-control, rightly ordered and harmonised action, is the best we can do in the limits of the mental formation, but it is a stage and not the goal of our growth of being. These are solutions by the way, palliatives, necessary means for a partial dealing with this root difficulty, provisional standards and devices given us as a temporary help and guidance because the true and total solution is beyond our present capacity and can only come when we have sufficiently evolved to see it and make it our main endeavour.

The true solution can intervene only when by our spiritual growth we can become one self with all beings, know them as part of our self, deal with them as if they were our other selves; for then the division is healed, the law of separate self-affirmation leading by itself to affirmation against or at the expense of others is enlarged and liberated by adding to it the law of our self-affirmation for others and our self-finding in their self-finding and self-realisation. It has been made a rule of religious ethics

to act in a spirit of universal compassion, to love one's neighbour as oneself, to do to others as one would have them do to us, to feel the joy and grief of others as one's own; but no man living in his ego is able truly and perfectly to do these things, he can only accept them as a demand of his mind, an aspiration of his heart, an effort of his will to live by a high standard and modify by a sincere endeavour his crude ego-nature. It is when others are known and felt intimately as oneself that this ideal can become a natural and spontaneous rule of our living and be realised in practice as in principle. But even oneness with others is not enough by itself, if it is a oneness with their ignorance; for then the law of ignorance will work and error of action and wrong action will survive even if diminished in degree and mellowed in incidence and character. Our oneness with others must be fundamental, not a oneness with their minds, hearts, vital selves, egos, — even though these come to be included in our universalised consciousness, — but a oneness in the soul and spirit, and that can only come by our liberation into soul-awareness and self-knowledge. To be ourselves liberated from ego and realise our true selves is the first necessity; all else can be achieved as a luminous result, a necessary consequence. That is one reason why a spiritual call must be accepted as imperative and take precedence over all other claims, intellectual, ethical, social, that belong to the domain of the Ignorance. For the mental law of good abides in that domain and can only modify and palliate; nothing can be a sufficient substitute for the spiritual change that can realise the true and integral good because through the spirit we come to the root of action and existence.

In the spiritual knowledge of self there are three steps of its self-achievement which are at the same time three parts of the one knowledge. The first is the discovery of the soul, not the outer soul of thought and emotion and desire, but the secret psychic entity, the divine element within us. When that becomes dominant over the nature, when we are consciously the soul and when mind, life and body take their true place as its instruments, we are aware of a guide within that knows the truth, the good, the true delight and beauty of existence, controls heart and intellect by its luminous law and leads our life and being

towards spiritual completeness. Even within the obscure workings of the Ignorance we have then a witness who discerns, a living light that illumines, a will that refuses to be misled and separates the mind's truth from its error, the heart's intimate response from its vibrations to a wrong call and wrong demand upon it, the life's true ardour and plenitude of movement from vital passion and the turbid falsehoods of our vital nature and its dark self-seekings. This is the first step of self-realisation, to enthrone the soul, the divine psychic individual in the place of the ego. The next step is to become aware of the eternal self in us unborn and one with the self of all beings. This self-realisation liberates and universalises; even if our action still proceeds in the dynamics of the Ignorance, it no longer binds or misleads because our inner being is seated in the light of self-knowledge. The third step is to know the Divine Being who is at once our supreme transcendent Self, the Cosmic Being, foundation of our universality, and the Divinity within of which our psychic being, the true evolving individual in our nature, is a portion, a spark, a flame growing into the eternal Fire from which it was lit and of which it is the witness ever living within us and the conscious instrument of its light and power and joy and beauty. Aware of the Divine as the Master of our being and action, we can learn to become channels of his Shakti, the Divine Puissance, and act according to her dictates or her rule of light and power within us. Our action will not then be mastered by our vital impulse or governed by a mental standard, for she acts according to the permanent yet plastic truth of things, — not that which the mind constructs, but the higher, deeper and subtler truth of each movement and circumstance as it is known to the supreme knowledge and demanded by the supreme will in the universe. The liberation of the will follows upon the liberation in knowledge and is its dynamic consequence; it is knowledge that purifies, it is truth that liberates: evil is the fruit of a spiritual ignorance and it will disappear only by the growth of a spiritual consciousness and the light of spiritual knowledge. The division of our being from the being of others can only be healed by removing the divorce of our nature from the inner soul-reality, by abolishing the veil between our becoming and our self-being, by bridging the

remoteness of our individuality in Nature from the Divine Being who is the omnipresent Reality in Nature and above Nature.

But the last division to be removed is the scission between this Nature and the Supernature which is the Self-Power of the Divine Existence. Even before the dynamic Knowledge-Ignorance is removed, while it still remains as an inadequate instrumentation of the spirit, the supreme Shakti or Supernature can work through us and we can be aware of her workings; but it is then by a modification of her light and power so that it can be received and assimilated by the inferior nature of the mind, life and body. But this is not enough; there is needed an entire remoulding of what we are into a way and power of the divine Supernature. The integration of our being cannot be complete unless there is this transformation of the dynamic action; there must be an uplifting and change of the whole mode of Nature itself and not only some illumination and transmutation of the inner ways of the being. An eternal Truth-Consciousness must possess us and sublimate all our natural modes into its own modes of being, knowledge and action; a spontaneous truth-awareness, truth-will, truth-feeling, truth-movement, truth-action can then become the integral law of our nature.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK, PART I